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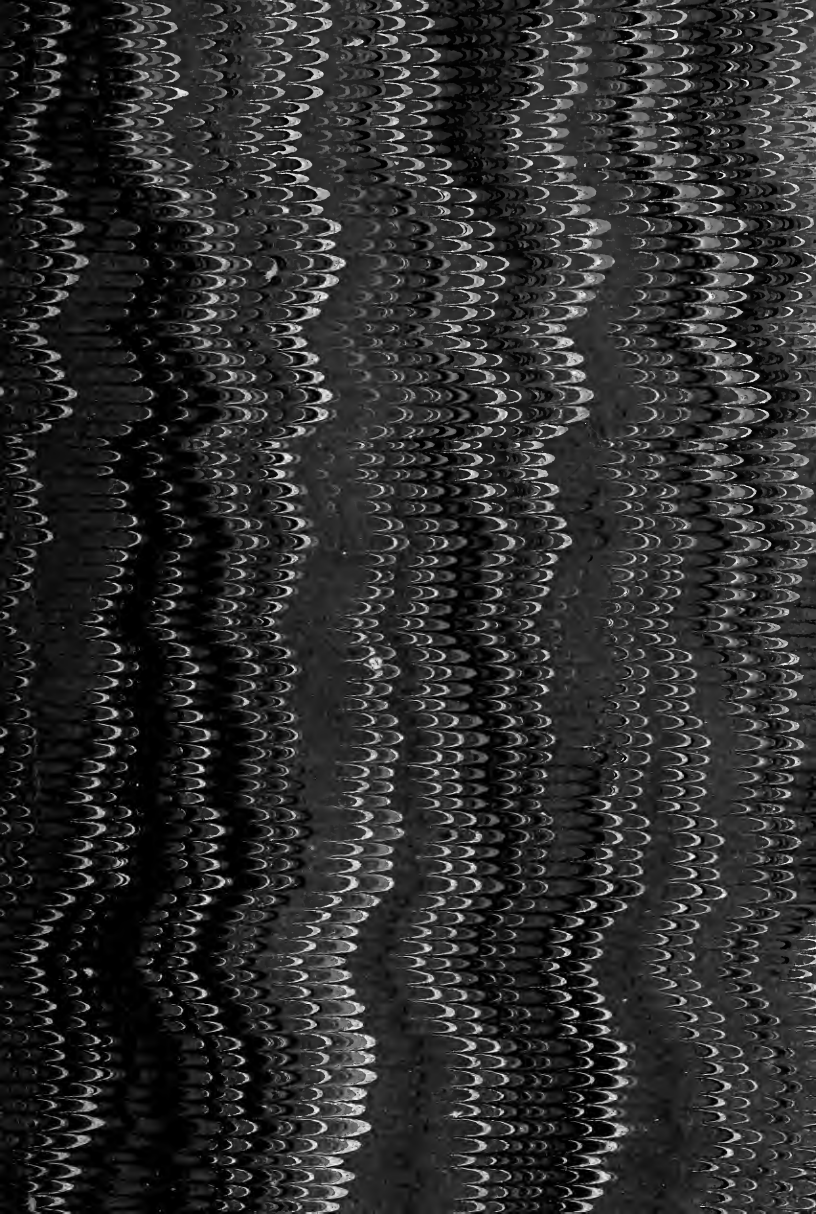

SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

OF

NEW YORK.

"Custom forms us all:
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fixed beliefs,
Are consequences of our place of birth."

AARON HILL.

"Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate;
In all things ruled—mind, body, and estate."

GEORGE CRABBE.

"There are not unfrequently substantial reasons underneath for customs that appear to be absurd."

CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

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SOCIAL ETIQUETTE IN NEW YORK.

INTRODUCTION.

In response to numerous and constant applications from all parts of the country for information regarding social forms and usages in New York, the author has prepared a series of articles, in which special pains have been taken to make them represent faithfully and accurately existing customs in New York society, in distinction from the many manuals on the subject that have simply reproduced the codes of Paris and London. These foreign exemplars may have sufficed for all practical purposes years ago, when both town and country were in a more rudimental stage of development; but they are now clearly useless, when society has acquired a certain definite character, and New York is a law unto itself in

the same way, if not in the same degree, as the great capitals of Europe. There is still a considerable variation of usage in circles ranking themselves as "our best society," and no person not thoroughly conversant with the gradations could draw the line between the living law, which is to remain and grow with the city's growth, and the obsolete traditions, which only linger through their own inertia and the incapacity of their devotees to adapt themselves to the larger present conditions of social development. The author of this manual has not attempted to modify or to improve upon existing forms, or to question either the taste or the propriety of our fixed usages, but to furnish a report or a description of our customs as taught and practised by the superior families of New York city.

I.

THE VALUE OF ETIQUETTE.

To enter a social circle without being familiar with its customs and its best usages is like attempting to dance a quadrille without knowing its forms. It is claimed that kindliness of heart and gentleness of manners will make rudeness impossible. This is very true, but the finest and the sweetest of impulses, combined, fail to produce graceful habits or prevent painful awkwardness. An intimate acquaintance with the refined customs and highest tones of society insures harmony in its conduct, while ignorance of them inevitably produces discords and confusion. Fortunate are those who were born in an atmosphere of intelligent refinement, because mistakes to them are almost impossible. They know no other way than the right one in the management of their social affairs.

As to the unfortunates who have been reared at remote distances from the centres of civilization, there is nothing left for them to do but to make a careful study of unquestionable authority in those matters of etiquette which prevail among the most refined people. High breeding may be imitated, and a gentle courtesy of manner may be acquired through the same processes by which other accomplishment is perfected. Even a disagreeable duty may be so beautified by graciousness that it will appear almost as if it were a compliment. Elegant manners should not be considered beneath the attention of any man or any woman. They will carry a stranger farther up the heights of social ambition than money, mental culture, or personal beauty. Combine elegance of manner with thoughtfulness and any other of the three powers, and the world is vanquished.

Etiquette is the machinery of society. It polishes and protects even while conducting its charge. It prevents the agony of uncertainty, and soothes even when it cannot cure the pains of blushing bashfulness. If one is certain of

being correct, there is little to be anxious about. Etiquette may be despotic, but its cruelty is inspired by intelligent kindliness. It is like a wall built up around us to protect us from disagreeable, underbred people, who refuse to take the trouble to be civil. Those who defy the rules of the best society, and claim to be superior to them, are always coarse in their moral fibre, however strong they may be intellectually.

Different civilized nations have provided for themselves sets of rules which have been established slowly, carefully, and firmly, to suit their peculiar sentiments and requirements. These codes serve as a music that is felt, when not heard, and communities walk by it in beautiful harmony and ease. Etiquette once having become a fixed habit, ceases to be that dreadful thing which the too free American abhors. It is a steadfast friend, a sure guide, and an armor against which malicious arrows may fly without leaving a mark. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that etiquette must of necessity be a cold formality. The warmth or chill of one's conduct is regulated by private sentiment,

and a kindliness is always all the more beautiful if it is gracefully and appropriately extended.

Possibly those vagrants who scorn etiquette, and refuse to take the white high-road of a refined civilization, do not possess those necessary aptitudes for imitation which are requisite for the easy acquirement of customs and formalities which by birth are alien to them. Sneering is not infrequently a thin and foolish veil by which they endeavor to hide their lack of birth and breeding. If such undisciplined persons would only submit to custom, and use their best powers of adaptation, they would soon discover that formality is as easy as a tune that sings itself in one's thought without a sound being heard.

The slight and agreeable variations which are often made in the forms and usages of well-bred people in their intercourse with the world may be compared to the different parts of that same melody. Courtesy is inherited only by Nature's favorites, and *brusquerie*, through the "irony of fate," is often the unfortunate natural expression of tenderest souls; but inheritances may be escaped by the will, just as a club-foot may be

made straight if taken in season and persistently righted. A courteous person, with a natural misfortune of form or features, may become the most delightful of society's favorites, if winning charms of manner are acquired and practiced. Etiquette can no more justly be called coldness, than vulgar, loud and gushing warmth can be considered attractive or elegant.

Individual tendencies guide us in the conduct of our lives, but they are not trustworthy instructors in the prevailing and most acceptable etiquette for arranging our relations with our friends and acquaintances, or of entertaining our guests.

From the unsettled state of sentiment and opinion which prevailed among us a few years ago, fortunately we are mostly emancipated. We may, and doubtless did, appear "grotesquely raw," as our English critic declared, and *très drôle*, according to the better-bred Parisian visitor, and very likely neither of these sharers of our too abundant hospitalities will approve of our present style of conducting our social affairs whenever and wherever these points shall differ

from their own established formalities; but that matters nothing to us. We possess an undeniable right to ordain a social code of our own, and we confess frankly and thankfully that we have imitated whatever we have considered wisest and pleasantest in the habits of French, English, and other nations. As the formality of social matters in France is less heavy and more graceful than it is in England, New York, which is admitted to be the metropolitan city of America, has discreetly chosen its customs largely from the former, modifying and adapting them to accord with our national conditions.

Everything which refines the habits of a people ennobles it, and hence the importance of furnishing to the public all possible aids to superior manners.

Even frugality itself has its beautiful methods of being elegant and hospitable, and no one need be less attractive in his courtesies because he happens not to be rich. Delicate attentions and the charms of a superior manner will compel a simple entertainment to seem like a royal banquet, and lend to a modest house a smile of fas-

cinating beauty. The charm of this achievement lies in the art of receiving and entertaining; and a cordial courtesy which is not oppressive, but which sits lightly upon both giver and receiver, is the perfection of hospitality. The costliest banquetings are unacceptable to the highly-bred gentleman or lady if their appointments be wanting in good taste, and their conduct be awkward.

Awkwardness is the twin-brother of embarrassment, and they are never separated.

A delicate, prompt, and appropriate courtesy is superior to an untimely honor. None but the thoughtless or the vulgar (and to be thoughtless *is* to be vulgar, some wise man insists,) indulge in excesses of any kind. The numbers of the invited guests, and the quantity and quality of their feastings, are subjects for nice consideration, and the condition of the public mind and also the public purse will go far toward measuring out the grade of a banquet, and controlling the quality of an entertainment. Courteous hosts will never violate a public sentiment in their pleasures. It is quite enough of moral combat

to trample down prejudice and wrong. If the community be sorrowful or depressed, no well-bred individual will make a parade of rejoicing. If financial anxieties weary and worry the masses, fortunate individuals, with delicate sentiments or refined feelings, express no social rejoicings. No feasts and no festivities will be given in the presence of neighboring poverty or distress.

This influencing sentiment of common sympathy was born and nourished by republicanism. Free as we are in all our opinions, and also in the expression of them, a common brotherhood clasps our hearts closely, and a common formula of courtesies, which is known as our own social etiquette, should be the thoroughly understood method of communicating our regard for each other. While this etiquette becomes gentle speech for kindly people, it also serves as a guard and preserver of our household sanctities.

II.

INTRODUCTIONS.

LADIES of social equality are introduced to each other, and so also are gentlemen. The latter, however, are always presented to ladies. The distinction in the form is an agreeable and proper homage to womankind, which a true gentleman is glad to pay to her.

The forms of introductions and presentations must necessarily differ in a country where an equality of citizenship is established by constitutional law. The endeavor to fix social formalities by a judicial power becomes a comical absurdity when attempted in New York; therefore intellectual development, refined culture, and gentleness of breeding, combine to arrange our forms of presentation and introduction in such flexible ways as shall satisfy all grades of society.

It is probable that from the foreign custom of announcing guests from the thresholds of *salons*

by a loud-voiced servant is acquired our habit of mentioning the name of the less important or the younger person first. To make this distinction appear less emphatic, when the difference between the parties introduced is a debatable one, it has become the formal custom among many to say, "Mrs. A., this is Mrs. H.; Mrs. H., Mrs. A." A balance of respect is thus struck, or very nearly so, by this arrangement.

If a gentleman is presented to a lady by a gentleman, of course permission is first secured from the lady, and afterward the presentation is made complimentary by its formula: "Mr. Mortimer desires to be presented to Mrs. or Miss Fairfax."

Or if the lady or gentleman making the presentation desires the unknown parties to become acquainted for his or her own personal reasons, he or she says: "This is Mr. Mortimer, Mrs. Fairfax. It gives me pleasure to present him to you." The married lady replies according to her inclination, of course regulating the expression of her sentiments by courtesy and good-breeding. If she be glad to know Mr. Morti-

mer, she says so with frankness and cordiality; and she briefly thanks the presenting party as soon as she has accepted the new acquaintance, and then the presenter retires. The young lady can only express a polite recognition of the gentleman presented, by bowing, smiling, and mentioning the name of the new acquaintance as a response. The expressed gratification is all made by the gentleman, and he will never fail to say some complimentary thing to her in regard to the ceremony. Two ladies may extend hands to each other, and so also may two gentlemen, although hand-shaking is not so common as formerly. The introduced parties may be as friendly as they please to each other, although excessive cordiality is not considered a part of high-breeding at the first meeting of people in general society, because the estimate in which strangers hold each other usually rests upon a flimsy or a fictitious basis. Hearty good-fellowship demands something more than an inventory of the features of those whom we meet.

If the difference in age between two ladies or two gentlemen be unmistakably perceptible,

the younger is introduced to the elder. If a publicly-admitted superiority exists, age, unless very advanced, is unconsidered in this formality. The unknown to fame is presented to the famous.

The single lady is introduced to the married lady, and the single gentleman to the married, other things being equal.

Those persons who have been born and reared in the best society never make a hasty presentation or introduction. An habitual though momentary reflection adjusts in their own minds the proper relation of the two who are about to be made known to each other, and unpleasant mistakes thus become almost impossible.

In another chapter sufficient is written in regard to that easy elegance of manner which every person should acquire and maintain at a private party, or in the reception-room of one who has been a hostess. Introductions should be considered wholly unnecessary to a pleasant conversation. Every person should feel that he is, at least for the time being, upon

a social equality with every guest who is present. That a person was bidden to the entertainment proves that the host so considers him, and the acceptance of the invitation levels him, for the time being, either up or down to the social grade of all whom he may meet, no matter at what estimate he may hold himself when elsewhere. A lady or gentleman must conduct himself or herself, while remaining in the house, as if there were no more exalted society than that which is present. To converse above the comprehension of a temporary companion is an unpardonable egotism, and to convey to a fellow-guest the impression that surroundings superior to the present are the only ones with which the speaker is familiar is incontrovertible testimony to the contrary. If polished people were his only customary society, unpleasant comparisons would be impossible to his tongue. Genuine excellence is never compelled to assert or explain itself, if it happens to be thrown among a people with less polished formalities of manner, or a less elegant conduct of social matters. A nobility of sentiment compels its possessors to be agreeable to

simpler folk whom they meet, and an introduction to an inferior in breeding and position will never be met with other than a kindly acknowledgment. It is for the gently bred to show by example the attractions of a higher standard of conduct. Superiority of character is never outwardly disturbed by contact with lesser excellence. It is self-centred, and holds itself in readiness to compel others to be content with its presence. There will be no wounded vanity stirring in the heart of the one who is presented, nor an inflated pride in the mind of the person who receives a new acquaintance, if the customs of our most refined society become familiar to all who enter its charmed circle.

III.

SALUTATIONS.

If bowing to a lady expressed deference, then might any gentleman incline his head to every woman he met; but it does not. It means recognition and nothing else, and it is her prerogative to offer this, and the gentleman's to accept it. Under no circumstances have merely formal acquaintances, who are equals in age and position, a right to change this formality. Between intimate friends, it is immaterial which bows first, the gentleman or lady. The lady may be distant or cordial in her salutation, and the gentleman must be respectfully responsive to her manner, and claim no more attention than she offers to him. A carefully-bred lady will never be capricious in her public recognitions of gentlemen, nor will she be demonstrative. Self-respect withholds her from expressing any private sentiments of dislike in her public greet-

ings, although she may refuse to recognize an acquaintance for good and sufficient reasons. Her greetings will be fully polite, or they will not be given at all. She will not insult an acquaintance by a frigid salutation, which may be observed by strangers. Under all circumstances, upon the promenade, the street, or in other public places, her smiles are faint and her bows are reserved, but they are not discourteous, and no gentleman possesses the right to criticise this dignified demeanor, no matter how cordially she may have received him at a recent ball, or when he last paid his respects to her at her home.

A faint smile and a formal bow are all that the most refined lady accords to the visitor of her family when she passes him in her walks or drives. If a gentleman lifts his hat and stops after she has recognized him, he may ask her permission to turn and accompany her for a little, or even a long distance. Under no circumstances will he stand still in the street to converse with her, or be offended if she excuse herself and pass on. She may be in haste, or otherwise absorbed, and his conversation may be

an interruption to her thought, even though she be at other times graciously pleased to entertain him with her social accomplishments. Neither may he ask this favor of her unless he be an admitted friend and visitor of her family.

A lady may remember and recognize a gentleman who has been formally presented to her, even when he cannot recall her face, so much change does evening toilet and gaslight often create in a lady's appearance. His acknowledgment of her recognition must be as respectfully courteous to an apparent stranger as it would be to a valued friend. The passers in the street know no difference in individuals. A gentleman is compelled to suppose that an apparent lady is a lady, but a lady may use her own knowledge in public places, and, for excellent reasons, become oblivious of those whom she does not include within her circle of friends.

The same formalities must be observed at entertainments. The gentleman who is a formal acquaintance waits patiently for the lady-guest to recognize his presence. Of course at a private party no lady will be purposely uncivil to

any fellow-guest. It would be a discourtesy to an entertainer. Neither will she show sufficient gratification at meeting a gentleman, that the most self-admiring of that sex, to whom vanity is not traditionally imputed, shall be enabled to imagine that she craves his attention.

When entering a parlor to pay a brief visit, a gentleman should always carry his hat, leaving his overshoes, overcoat, and umbrella in the hall if it be winter time. The lady rises to receive him, unless she is an invalid, or advanced in years, in which case she receives him seated, and excuses herself from rising. If she extends her hand to him, he takes it respectfully; but he does not remove his glove, as was the old style. He never offers his hand first. He cannot do this any more than the mere acquaintance can bow first. If it be a hasty call, and others are present, he seldom seats himself, and takes leave very soon after another gentleman enters, even though his stay has been very brief. The lady still retains her seat and bows her *adieux*, without extending her hand a second time, even if she offered it upon his entrance. Hand-shaking

is very properly falling into disuse in ordinary visits.

A lady never accompanies a gentleman to the door of the drawing-room, much less to the vestibule, unless she desires him to understand that she entertains a profoundly respectful regard for him. She introduces him to no one, unless there be some especial reason why this formality should take place; but he converses with her other guests just as if he had met them before. No after recognition is warranted between gentlemen, or between ladies, and certainly not between a lady and gentleman, until they shall meet again in the drawing-room, when the gift of mutual speech is resumed. This custom may have its unpleasant aspects, but it is one of the safeguards of society. If the parties desire to be presented to each other, the opportunity is afforded them at these casual meetings. The hostess cannot easily refuse this formality if she be asked to perform it; and, if the acquaintance be mutually agreeable, it is well; but, if not, the lady can terminate it speedily between herself and a gentleman. It may not end thus

abruptly between ladies, or between gentlemen, and an easy after-nod of recognition costs nothing, and it may afford pleasure to another. Certainly there must be some positive cause for dislike that can prevent a well-bred person from bowing to one who has been admitted to the house of a mutual acquaintance, and properly introduced. Kindliness, considerateness, and all gracious courtesies belong together, and the gently bred are not likely to forget to express these charming virtues.

There may be circumstances when a gentleman may lift his hat to a passing lady, even though he cannot bow to her. She may be offended with him, and yet he may respect and feel kindly toward her. He may deserve her disregard, and it is permitted him to express his continued reverence by uncovering his head in her presence; but he has no right to look at her as she passes him. He must drop his eyes.

He lifts his hat to a lady whom he passes in a hall or corridor, unless the place be a thoroughfare, but he does not rest his glance upon her.

This is an expression of respect and courtesy to the sex.

It not infrequently happens when gentlemen are driving, that they cannot touch their hats because too closely occupied; but a cordial bow satisfies the most exacting of ladies under such circumstances. When riding in the saddle he may lift his hat, or touch its rim with his whip, according to convenience. Etiquette permits both styles of greeting.

In passing a group of mourners at a doorway, where their dead is being carried forth, or a funeral *cortége* in a quiet street, a gentleman will uncover his head. This is a beautiful French custom, and it is now so fully incorporated with our own habits that it may well be styled a part of our street etiquette. It is certainly an appropriate recognition of a sorrow that some time or other falls to the lot of all of us.

A gentleman always lifts his hat when offering a service to a strange lady. It may be the restoration of her kerchief or fan, the receiving of her change to pass it to the cash-box of a stage,

the opening of her umbrella as she descends from a carriage—all the same; he lifts it before he offers his service, or during the courtesy, if possible. She bows, and, if she choose, she also smiles her acknowledgment; but she does the latter faintly, and she does not speak. To say "Thank you!" is not an excess of acknowledgment, but it has ceased to be etiquette. A bow may convey more gratitude than speech.

This last information is more especially furnished to foreigners, who consider our ladies ungracious in some of their customs, and indelicately forward in others. In the matter of thanks to strangers for any little attentions they bestow upon ladies, we beg leave to establish our own methods, and no one finds it necessary to imitate the German, the French, the English, or the Spanish, in these delicate matters.

A gentleman opens a door for a strange lady, holds it open with one hand and lifts his hat with the other, while she passes through in advance of him. He always offers her the precedence; but he does it silently, and without resting his gaze upon her, as if he would say,

"You are a lady and I am a gentleman. I am polite for both our sakes. You may be young and charming, or you may be old and ugly; it is all the same to me. I have not looked at you to discern, but I am certain that you are a lady."

A gentleman who is walking in the street with a lady, touches his hat, and bows to whomever she salutes in passing. This is done in compliment to her acquaintance, who is most likely a stranger to him. If accompanying her across a drawing-room, and she bows to a friend, he inclines his head also; but he does not speak.

He always raises his hat when he begs a lady's pardon for an inadvertence, whether he is known to her or not.

Ladies who entertain hospitably, and possess hosts of acquaintances, are likely to invite many young gentlemen with whose families they are familiar, but who seldom have an opportunity of seeing their young friends except for a moment or two during an evening party. It would be strange if, sometimes, these ladies should not fail to recognize a late guest when they meet on

the promenade. Young gentlemen are oversensitive about these matters, and imagine that there must be a reason for this apparent indifference. If young gentlemen were not compelled, or did not choose to make their party calls by card, they would less often suffer through these omissions of courtesy. That a lady invites him to her house is an evidence of her respect; but she cannot charge her memory with the features of her multitude of young acquaintances, much as she would like to show this courtesy to them all. She is very likely a matron with many social cares, and this is one of those exceptional cases when a gentleman should be permitted to lift his hat, and spare the lady from an after-consciousness of having wounded his feelings. They are neither equals in age nor position, consequently he may use his own refined discretion as to whether he will express recognition or not. It would not be improper, because she is his superior. She desired him to be her guest, which signified her acceptance of his acquaintance, and this acquaintance has thus become something more than formal.

IV.

STRANGERS IN TOWN.

It is the rule among our best people to call upon the stranger who is in town. It is contrary to the usages of most polite nations, but we long ago adopted it, and present society approves of it. It has its pleasant and its unpleasant aspects, but the more satisfactory ones predominate. When a circle is large enough, and agreeable enough, combining such varieties of people as make it entertaining, a stranger, who is sensitive and considerate, feels unwilling to intrude upon it without an invitation. To thrust one's self among those who feel no social needs, requires an amount of self-approbation that is not possessed by the really admirable character. On the other hand, it is exceedingly unfortunate for the stranger who must wait outside the gates of society until some one shall think of him, and find time and inclination to go out of a pleasant

circle and invite the lonely individual into its charmed precincts.

But, then, who of us is there who would not rather wait and be sought, than to be considered an eager intruder? Time may seem to move too slowly to the impatient lover of society, but still it does not stand still, and recognition comes eventually if the stranger possesses attractive qualities of mind, manner, and character.

If the visitor brings letters of introduction, an *entrée* to society is easy through the usually observed forms, which will be fully treated in another chapter. If strangers who have come to reside with us, or even to visit our locality, bear credentials of respectability, courteous and hospitable residents will call upon them, after sufficient time has elapsed for the recently-arrived to have adjusted themselves to their new positions.

No introduction is necessary in such case. The resident ladies call between two and five o'clock, send in their own with their husbands' or their fathers' or brothers' cards, and, if they find the strangers disengaged, a brief and cordial interview ends the first visit. This must be re-

turned within a week, or a note of apology and explanation for the omission is sent, and the return-visit is then paid later on. If a card be sent in return for this visit, or is left in person without an effort to see the parties who have made the first visit, it is understood that the strangers prefer solitude, or that there are reasons why they cannot receive visitors. The one who has offered the welcoming hand of kindliness will have fulfilled a social duty, and there is no reason for regretting the attempt to entertain the stranger. It is more than possible that some unhappy circumstance compels this reserve. At any rate, it is far better to look for some sweet spring as the source of all incomprehensible conduct than it is to imagine an unpleasant or bitter one.

A gentleman should not make a first call upon the ladies of the family of a new-comer without an introduction or an invitation. His lady friend, or kinswoman, may leave his card, and he may receive an invitation, verbal or written, to make the new acquaintance. Under such circumstances the usual formality of introduction may

be made by his second visiting-card, which he will send in to announce himself at the time of his call, provided he pays his respects to the new household unaccompanied by a common friend.

The sending of his card to the strangers was an unmistakable request to make their acquaintance. If his visits be undesirable, the way is opened for an easy method of declining them. His card need not be noticed. This refusal of friendliness is far less awkward and unpleasant for both parties than to ask permission verbally to become a visitor and be verbally rejected. Sometimes there are unfortunate family complications or conditions which compel a refusal of gentlemen's society, but which are unexplainable. Painful necessities are oftenest the very ones least easy of explanation. No gentleman possesses a reasonable ground for offense, or for feeling hurt, if he be not admitted as a visitor to a family whose circumstances and conditions are unfamiliar to him. It is not difficult to imagine that the stranger who refuses to make a new friend is likely to suffer more than the rejected person.

A stranger can make no overtures for acquaintance to older residents, but, as frequently happens in large towns, two people may have desired each other's society for a long time, but the formalities of an introduction have been beyond easy reach. Or their names even may have been unknown to each other. They meet at the house of a friend, and conversation, either with or without presentation, often leads to a wish for further intercourse. This desire is expressed, and a mutual interchange of kindly interest and addresses takes place. The question then arises, "Who shall pay the first visit?" This is one of those matters which settle themselves. Mutual liking and sincere expressions of regard prepare the way for either one to make the initiative call. If one lady be the younger by many years, she should call first. This etiquette is based upon the supposition that the elder lady belongs to a larger circle of friends, and has more pressing social duties than the younger one. If the parties are equal in age and position, the one whose reception-day arrives earliest should receive the first call.

If their "at-home" hours are at the same time, a mutual arrangement, or the urgency of their admiration for each other, will settle this easily enough without formality.

Aged gentlemen or ladies, an eminent personage or a clergyman, always receive the first call. It is proper to leave a card for them, even when they are known to be too much engaged either to receive in person or to return calls of ceremony. The card signifies respectful and appreciative remembrance.

No custom is more significant of the highest and noblest breeding and the gentlest culture, than that of remembering the aged in all pleasant formalities. Our citizens are accused by other nations of indifference to those who are advanced in years. This may be true of selfish people and of plebeians, but it is not true of our refined and high-toned members of society. A thoughtful courtesy and a tender consideration make the late afternoon of life beautiful with respectful regard, even when a lack of familiar acquaintance has withheld affectionate devotion.

V.

DEBUTS IN SOCIETY.

THIS expression really signifies less than it ought in America, and it applies, in its ordinary sense, to ladies only. The gentleman of Europe, especially the first-born in England, is considered worthy of especial notice on the day upon which he attains his majority. Oftener than otherwise, the honors thrust upon him at this time by those who are beyond the strict limits of kinship, are measured by his prospective importance. It is quite otherwise with the young lady, either in Europe or America. According to the combined convictions and desires of parent and child, the time fixed for the girl to become a young lady, in the estimation of society, is from seventeen to twenty. If there are older unwed sisters, her *début* is often postponed, for reasons which need no explanation. The mamma determines the time when, by a proper

celebration, her daughter shall be accepted by the world as a fully matured woman, who may receive the homage of gentlemen if she desires their attention. She marks this transition from girl-life to young ladyhood by inviting only fitting friends to her house, where she may present this daughter to them as a member of their circle. This ceremony should convey the information to the world that the young lady has been graduated in all the accomplishments and knowledge necessary for her uses as a woman of society. In fact, it should mean that she has been instructed in all that deft wisdom which will be required by a *belle* of her circle and a queen of a household, for which she is, as all women are, a candidate. Young lady readers will object to this assertion, but it is, nevertheless, a fact.

It is common for them to decline matrimony before they are invited to accept it, on principles of modesty, just as ambitious politicians refuse an office before nomination. It is natural for women to become wives, and all the proper aims of a girl's life tend toward this relation, the hero

of which surely lives somewhere in her hopes of the future, no matter how vague and shapeless that other perhaps unknown but essential party to the alliance may be, who is hidden away in her imagination. He is most certainly in existence, else *débuts* in society would never have been formulated as an essential etiquette.

A *début* is a barrier between an immaturity of character and culture, and an admission of the completion of both. Previous to this event a young girl is not supposed to be sufficiently intelligent to be interesting to her elders among her own sex, and certainly not worldly-wise enough to associate with gentlemen.

In New York's best society she is never seen at a party that is composed of mature people outside of her father's house, previous to the finishing of her education; nor is she present at any formal entertainment given at her own residence, except it be on birthday anniversaries, christenings, or marriages.

Even admitting that the young girl be precocious enough to be interesting to her mother's guests, and that she possesses sufficient maturity

of intellect, and is discreet in her conversation with her elders, and with gentlemen in particular, a single taste of the fascinations of social life would interrupt the quiet and grave completion of her education, which is supposed to be at its most important state of progression and advancement between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years.

This explanation of our customs may be received partly as an expostulation intended for smaller towns, where young girls often enter society before leaving school. If this pernicious custom could only be made unfashionable in localities where it exists, the young girl would submit to remain a student much longer, and her expectant circle would receive a superior woman when she enlarges it with her matured presence.

Just previous to her formal presentation or *début*, her mother and her elder unmarried sisters—if she have them—pay visits, or at least leave their own with their father's and brothers' cards, upon all acquaintances whom they intend to invite to be present at the *début*. Engraved invitations follow this formality, and they are

issued about ten days previous to the event. If they are sent by post, an extra outer envelope incloses all the invitations that are directed to one family. If they are delivered by messenger, the outer wrap is no longer in use. The post has become as suitable a method as any for conveying social messages. One envelope is directed to Mr. and Mrs. A. If there are more daughters than one, the address is, "Misses A.," or, if preferred, "The Misses A." Each son receives a separate invitation. The question need not be asked why each young gentleman in the same household be individually bidden to be present when the daughters are not separately invited, because the answer would not be clear. It is the custom. Replies are sent in the names of the parties addressed on the envelopes.

The invitation is engraved in script, or, if crest or cipher be used, it may be placed on the envelope, and is in form similar to that used for parties, which we shall give in a later chapter. Cards have been shown us on which the special purpose of the party is stated, with the name of the young lady who is to make her *début*

engraved upon it; but this is rarely done, and has not the sanction of the more fastidious people.

The following is the formula if such a card is used:

MR. AND MRS. H. W. SAYCROFT
request the pleasure of
presenting their eldest [or second, etc.,] *daughter,*
MISS KATHERINE FELICIA,
to

---

on Monday evening, May 9th, at half-past eight o'clock.
Dancing at eleven. No. 59 Great Hubert Street.

A more acceptable method is simply to inclose the card of the young lady in the envelope containing the invitation.

The reply is written and forwarded directly, and corresponds in style to the invitation, in the following manner:

MR. AND MRS. A. V. JANSEN
accept with pleasure
MR. AND MRS. H. W. SAYCROFT'S
kind invitation for Monday evening, May 9th.
No. 6 Tudor Place. April 30.

The young ladies use the same form, and commence their note with "The Misses Saycroft," or in whatever style the invitation is sent to them. The young gentlemen follow the same custom.

Intimate friends may send flowers on the day of the young girl's first appearance, if they please; but it is not a rigid custom. It is only a pretty and pleasant welcome to her as she enters the world.

The young lady stands at the left of the mother during the reception of guests, and is presented to her elders and to ladies.

Of course, welcomes and brief congratulatory compliments are offered to her by each guest, and then place is made for the presentation of others who are arriving.

When supper is announced, if there is no brother, the father escorts the young lady to the table, and the mother follows at the last, accompanied by the most honored of the gentlemen present. If there be a brother, the father leads the way with the eldest or most distinguished lady of the party, and the brother escorts the

débutante, and places her at her father's left hand.

The gentleman who is her partner in the first dance is usually selected by the mother from among the nearest and dearest friends of the family; more than likely he is a kinsman. He dances but once with her; nor does any other gentleman ask for this honor a second time, although he may express his regret to her that such a pleasure is denied him by the natural rights of others who wish to be her partner upon this first evening of her appearance.

Visits of ceremony that are paid to the hostess following this entertainment of course include this young lady, but during her first season in society she has no card of her own. Nor does she pay formal visits alone. If she be the eldest unwed daughter, her name is engraved as Miss Saycroft, beneath that of her mother. If she have elder sisters at home, her name is engraved as Miss Katherine Felicia Saycroft. During this first season she does not receive gentlemen visitors without a chaperon under any pressure of circumstances. If her mother be unable to

receive with her, she declines a visit. After the first season her own separate card may be left, either alone or with those of other members of her family.

This formality past, the young lady may be considered launched into that fascinating world of social intercourse and fashionable pleasures toward which she has most likely looked longingly for two or three years.

The young gentleman somehow slips into society without formality. Whether or not it is because during the early years of the man he usually dislikes young ladies who are not his cousins, or because he is off at college and fully absorbed, it is not easy to determine. Certain it is that the young man finds his way into the charmed circle without much difficulty. He begins by endeavoring to assist his mother at her entertainments, and by being an escort to his sisters on informal evening visits among lady intimates, where his maturity and attractions win for him a future invitation.

If he has been educated abroad, or has been absent from home, upon his return to town his

mother or sisters leave his card with their own, which bit of paper signifies that his family expect him to be included in whatever courtesies and hospitalities are extended to themselves.

"The lad seldom longs for society, but the lass craves it the moment that she feels a stir of self-consciousness," insists an observer of the differences between boys and girls. If this be a truth, the necessary dividing line between the miss and the young lady cannot be too strongly marked, nor the importance of that formal barrier called a *début* be overestimated.

VI.

VISITING AND VISITING-CARDS FOR LADIES.

To the unrefined or the underbred person, the visiting-card is but a trifling and insignificant bit of paper; but, to the cultured disciple of social law, it conveys a subtle and unmistakable intelligence. Its texture, style of engraving, and even the hour of leaving it, combine to place the stranger whose name it bears in a pleasant or a disagreeable attitude, even before his manners, conversation, and face have been able to explain his social position. The higher the civilization of a community, the more careful it is to preserve the elegance of its social forms. It is quite as easy to express a perfect breeding in the fashionable formalities of cards as by any other method, and perhaps, indeed, it is the safest herald of an introduction for a stranger. Its texture should be fine, its engraving a plain script, its size neither too small, so that its re-

cipients shall say to themselves, "A whimsical person," nor too large, to suggest ostentation.

Refinement seldom touches extremes in anything. No flourishes, but clear, medium-sized letters, with the prefix of "Mrs." or "Miss" in every case, except where there is a title. No lady should use a suggestion of her husband's political honors, religious rank, military or naval position, or his professional occupation, either by abbreviation or otherwise. She does not wish to be honored for his sake, but for her own. A lady may be mentioned with the honorable prefix that her husband bears, but she should never assume it herself. It is not etiquette, and is in bad taste. Besides, there is no limit arranged for grades. If one lady is to be called "Mrs. Mayor Puff," there is another who, upon the same principle, should be styled "Mrs. Detective Key," or "Mrs. City Scavenger Spade." Ladies who are not themselves professional never prefix a title to their cards. Nor need they, even when their family pride of place is at its fiercest, because custom permits her to leave her husband's card with her own upon all those

occasions which require hers, and in many instances the use of his card with hers is a matter of strict etiquette.

The card is the medium of social intercourse when we are in our gayest moods, and we choose it to convey our sympathies to the sorrowful. The friendliest sentiments are expressed by a timely card, and our coldest and bitterest dislikes can be similarly carried to an enemy. It tells its little story of fondness or of indifference, according to the promptness and the method of its arrival. It announces a friend, and it says *adieu.* It congratulates delicately, but unmistakably, and it is the brief bearer of tidings which a volume could explain with no more clearness.

The card etiquette of the best society of New York is necessarily different from what it would be if our royalty and rank were inherited, instead of acquired. The same formalities prevail throughout the entire country, with the exception of Washington, which has customs peculiar to its fluctuating political conditions, more or less modified by the presence of foreign embas-

sadors. Card and other etiquette, in that single city, is governed by its own social by-laws, to which no other place could conform, even if it chose to imitate our national capital.

In France the stranger always pays the first visit, either with or without an introductory letter. In England, among equals in rank, an invitation to call follows the leaving of a card, provided the acquaintance is desired. In New York, an introduction is a formal necessity. An acquaintance to be formed between strangers may be arranged by card, where a personal presentation is inconvenient. Letters of introduction are not now so frequently used as formerly, unless some explanation is required. The introducing lady uses the following formula, neatly and distinctly written, upon the upper half, at the left-hand corner, of his or her own visiting-card:

INTRODUCING

MRS. FELIX GRANDCOURT.

This card is enclosed in an envelope with that of the lady desiring this presentation. This envelope must be of a fine quality, and

either posted or sent by messenger. There was a time when a messenger only was considered either proper or courteous, but the postal delivery is now approved, and is equally appropriate for the uses of the greater part of a lady's messages. The lady who receives the two cards must call in person, or, if this be impossible, some member of the family must call, or a letter be sent by special messenger to explain the omission. Nothing less than this is possible, without offending the introducing party.

If the call is made upon the sender of the two cards, not more than three days should intervene between this courtesy and the introduction. This visit must be as promptly returned, unless an "At home" day is mentioned, either upon the visiting-card or during the interview. If no special courtesies are extended, and the introduced lady resides at a distance, she must leave a card with P. P. C. (*pour prendre congé*) written upon it, to give information of her departure; but, if their acquaintance has gone no farther than one visit each, she need not call again, and her leave-taking card closes the courtesy. If

she be a resident of the city, she may include the new acquaintance in her formal visiting-list, and invite her to receptions; but she cannot first ask the acquaintance, whom she has herself desired, to a breakfast, luncheon, or dinner. It would be obtrusive. The first hospitality is a privilege that is very properly reserved to the one who has received an unsought acquaintance.

After a personal introduction, the oldest resident may, if she choose, leave a card, which must be similarly acknowledged within a week, unless a visiting day is engraved or written upon the card of the first caller, when that special occasion cannot be overlooked without a return card or a written apology. No further visiting is necessary, unless mutually convenient or agreeable. Even this limited intercourse makes frequent meetings in society easier and more agreeable, and it involves nothing. It is simply ornamenting the barren wastes of speechlessness.

When a lady changes her residence, she must leave her card, with her new address, upon those

to whom she is indebted for a visit; but she need not enter, and she may send it by post to those upon whom she made the last call. Her new neighborhood may be out of the limits of her late friends' visiting range, or it may be located in a street that is distasteful; hence the first card should never include a call upon formal acquaintances.

When a lady leaves town for the summer, or for a voyage, if the season be well advanced, she sends her own and her family's P. P. C. cards, with temporary address upon them, by mail, when she has had no opportunity of taking leave during an accidental interview. When she returns to town again she sends out her cards, with or without an "At home" day upon them. The properly-kept visiting-book of each lady will decide who should pay the first call in the autumn.

If a young lady is to be married, she leaves her card in person, about three weeks before the event; but she does not visit. Her mother's or *chaperon's* card accompanies her own. Their names are not engraved together, as they may

have been upon their previous visiting-cards. The young lady, being about to assume a new dignity, very properly leaves an independent name and address for each lady member of the household which she honors. Its signification is plain. She desires to retain their friendship in her new relation; and, as she is about to be the central figure of another house, and the dispenser of its courtesies, it is proper for her to leave this intimation of a future welcome to gentlemen and ladies alike. (Other card formalities for weddings will be found in their proper chapter.)

If a death occurs in the household of a friend, a card with any appropriate sentiment written upon it, or a bouquet of cut-flowers and a card, are sent directly. This bouquet is not intended for a funeral parade, but an emblem of personal sympathy and affection. The same gentle recognition of any felicitous event, such as the birth of a child, a private wedding, the entering of a new house, etc., is a pleasant, but not rigid, etiquette among friends and admirers.

Among acquaintances the card only, with no

intruding expression upon it, is left, either with or without flowers—usually without, when a sorrow has fallen upon a family. This card may be that of a stranger even; but it is never sent, and always left in person, or it is carried by special messenger, as a more delicate recognition of the grave event. This act is one of gentle kindliness, and demands no acknowledgment whatever. It is compelled by too delicate a sentiment for the sympathizer to desire a reply.

This etiquette is not a necessity, but is only a proof of gentle breeding and refined manners. It is what the Parisian means by *noblesse oblige*, and it is becoming more and more a custom in New York's best society.

Cards are always first left in the hall when entering a reception. This custom makes the debtor and creditor list of the entertainer easier to arrange, because announcing names is rarely done in New York; and, even if it were, in large circles the memory must be excellent that can retain all the faces of those who accept these courtesies. Provided an invitation to a party or a reception is necessarily declined after having

been accepted, cards are sent by messenger upon the same evening, and an explanatory note is forwarded the next day, when more leisure will make its excuses and its regrets comprehensible.

The card etiquette of ladies is not at all difficult. Familiarity with the best usages of society and a little leisure insure a smooth social intercourse with the world. The unmistakable expression of a card, of course, depends upon the time of its arrival, and also the method of its conveyance. An invitation-card and a reply to it may go by post, but a card of sympathy or of congratulation cannot. This must be left in person, if possible, otherwise by special messenger.

The forms and qualities of cards and their style of engraving are a matter in which a delicate taste is not thrown away. This has been mentioned before, and we emphasize it.

The husband's card should accompany that of his wife upon all formal occasions; but it is no longer stylish for both names to be engraved upon the same card, except directly after marriage. The mother's and the eldest daughter's

names are always engraved upon the same card during the first season of the young lady's appearance in society, and afterward, if agreeable. This is the form:

MRS. FELIX GRANDCOURT.
MISS GRANDCOURT.
101 Silver Avenue.

If there are more than one daughter in society,

MISSES GRANDCOURT

is a proper form to use. If a *chaperon* other than the mother introduces and accompanies young ladies into society, her visiting-card and theirs are left together, to prevent a misunderstanding of their relations, and to intimate that they are inseparable for the season.

When a son has entered society, his mother leaves his card with her husband's and her own, which signifies that it is expected that he will be included in the season's invitations. This is strict etiquette. In a city of business gentlemen, this arrangement explains family conditions which might not otherwise be understood; and,

after one invitation is received from a lady by the son, he can manage his own social matters with her by making his party call, and leaving his own card and address.

The arrangement of his *entrée* into society is managed by his mother, or by a near lady relative, provided the mother is unable to attend to those formalities which strict etiquette demands.

Not longer than a week must elapse before the cards of all who have been invited, whether the invitation was accepted or not, are to be left by some member of the family, upon both host and hostess, and also upon any one for whom the entertainment may have been given. A single lady member of the family may perform this social duty of returning cards of thanks and congratulations upon the success of the *fête*, because, in the height of a gay season, pressing engagements compel a division of these formalities. Gentlemen cannot assist in these social arrangements, and thus relieve the lady members of the family. They may, however, leave a lady's card at a house of sorrow, but not after a festivity.

VII.

CARD AND VISITING CUSTOMS FOR GENTLEMEN.

AFTER a gentleman has been presented to a lady, he may be in doubt whether the acquaintance will prove agreeable to her. He may be too delicate to give her the unpleasantness of refusing him permission to call upon her, should he beg such an honor. Therefore, if he covet her acquaintance, he leaves his card at her residence, and her mother or *chaperon* will send an invitation to him to visit the family, or, perhaps, to be present at an entertainment, after which it is his duty to call and pay his respects. If the list of her acquaintance be already too extensive, no notice need be taken of the card, and he will wait for a recognition from the ladies of the household when they meet again. If the acquaintance be really desirable, a prompt acknowledgment of his desire to become ac-

quainted is admitted in some refined and acceptable form.

If he be introduced by card or by letter, he calls upon the lady addressed, and inquires for the ladies of the family, and sends in his own card, carefully addressed, along with that which introduces him. Of course he is received, if the introducing party be properly respected; and then, if the acquaintance be mutually agreeable, there are easy methods of discovering it to each other. Whether he be welcome for his own sake, or for that of the person who introduced him, he will not be long in discovering. There will be equally easy and early methods of breaking off the acquaintance if it prove less agreeable to the gentleman than was anticipated, and yet there need be no breach of etiquette, and no lessening of the highest social tone in the intercourse between the two parties.

An invitation to visit a gentleman who is a new acquaintance without mentioning the probable time of being able to receive him, is equivalent to no invitation at all, and the invited person need not hazard a call.

If a gentleman asks for a presentation to an elderly, or to a married lady, she understands it to be complimentary, and her manner may say "Thank you!" without emphasizing her gratitude by an invitation to him to continue the acquaintance. When he meets her again he must wait for her recognition, without the slightest intimation upon his countenance that they have met before. When she bows to him, he has an equal opportunity of expressing thanks by his manner. But if at the introduction she chooses to be sufficiently pleased with him, and she is assured of his social position, she may extend to him permission to pay his respects to her. As a well-bred unmarried lady cannot do this, the young gentleman, in such a case, must bide his time by leaving his card, as before intimated.

This arrangement renders the making of acquaintances an easy and comprehensible affair, provided it is agreeable to both persons, and it is a wall of defense against strange and unwelcome visitors. However unpleasant the result may be of an attempt to make a lady's acquaintance in

this manner, every true gentleman will recognize the necessity of barriers across the sacred threshold of home.

The style of the gentleman's card, and his address, often secure acceptability when combined with the recollection of the host or hostess who made the presentation; and, by the same token which he took the trouble to leave at the lady's door, she is certain that the gentleman really desires to visit her, and he can never suppose, much less say, that her family name was an unwelcome one upon his list of visiting-places.

The receiver of the card makes a careful study of its style. The fine, lustreless texture, and the unpretentious size of the card; its lack of flourish if it be a *fac-simile*, or its clear script, with the full address of the applicant for acquaintance placed at the lower right-hand corner; the prefix of Mr., if it be engraved in the latter style, and its omission if the card represent the signature of the bearer, affect the social thermometer unmistakably. If it is in perfect taste, she admires him unconsciously for this

evidence of excellent style, refinement, and familiarity with the details of a high social position and delicate breeding. She also observes the hour of his formal call. If he be a business gentleman, who cannot command the hours of the day, his first call is made between half-past eight and nine o'clock in the evening. If he be able to command leisure, he calls at the strictly conventional time, between two and five o'clock P. M. The careless, ignorant, or too eager business man will call as early as half-past seven P. M., for fear that the lady may be out. This displeases the highly-bred young hostess. It proves to her that he is either unfamiliar with the elegant etiquette of exclusive society, or else that he scorns formality, and she dislikes both ignorance and indifference to the best social usages.

A gentleman leaves a card for both host and hostess within a week after an entertainment to which he has been invited, whether he accepted or declined the hospitality. If he cannot call, the card is imperative; and a young man must possess scanty leisure indeed if he cannot ring

a bell and leave this little recognition of a courtesy.

A gentleman will always promptly accept or decline an invitation to anything. It was once an unsettled question whether or not receptions, kettledrums, and the like gatherings, required the formality of a reply. That vague doubt is terminated. *Every invitation should be answered*, and then there can be no misunderstanding. It is not much for the busiest of young men to do this, since the post is the acceptable and prompt medium for this sort of interchange of civilities.

If he receives a card which introduces another gentleman to him, it is accompanied by the card of the gentleman who makes the introduction. This is very properly delivered by the postal service, because etiquette between gentlemen permits it; but he must recognize its reception in person within three days, or, in case of inevitable failure to do this, he must send a card by special messenger, with explanation and the offer of such courtesies as are possible to him, provided, of course, the introducing person be entitled to such consideration. After an inter-

change of these paper civilities, the acquaintance may proceed, or cease, without unpleasant feelings upon either side, provided the receiver of the introductory card is satisfied that he owes no more than this to the presenting person who sent the stranger to him. If an acquaintance be formed that is agreeable, the receiving gentleman must offer the first hospitable courtesies before he can accept any from his friend's friend. If the latter depart from town after these formalities, he must leave his parting card on the eve of going away. Whenever he returns to the city again, he may, if he desires, send his own card, and expect no recognition of its arrival. If it is noticed, he may be convinced that it is for his own sake that the meagre acquaintance is revived and kept warm. A gentleman will always leave a card for a bereaved friend, and in whatever other delicate and sympathetic ways that are possible to him he may show his comprehension of the sorrow; but it must be a very familiar friendship indeed that permits him to write of it, or to speak of it when they meet. The days of agonizing letters of condolence are

happily past. Etiquette now permits the wounds of the heart to heal, without bruising and rending them by long letters of sympathy.

A gentleman never makes a formal call without asking to see all the ladies of the family. He sends in or leaves his card for each individual. If he be calling upon a young lady who is a guest in a household with whom he has no acquaintance, he must ask to see her hostess at the same time, and also send her his card. This hostess of his friend may decline interrupting his visit with her presence, but it is considered elegant and hospitable for her to descend before his visit terminates, to assure him that her guest's friends are welcome to her house.

When he desires to see a lady whom he meets in society, she may, if the acquaintance warrants it, and she has been out in society one full season, receive him without the presence of her mother or *chaperon*, and he may not construe this informality into an indelicacy. It is a standard of social freedom that is proper to an American, and should not be criticised.

The mother is likely to excuse herself. She

knows the constantly-expressed desire to see herself is complimentary and respectful, and as such the well-bred lady usually receives it; but should she appear, and remain during the entire visit, all the same, he must be agreeable to her, and ask for her every time he calls. If her presence is unsatisfactory to the daughter, they two can arrange these social affairs between themselves. The visitor cannot be released from the obligations which strict etiquette has laid upon him. And besides, if the mother be the cultured and elegant conversationist that time and superior social intercourse should have produced, she will elevate the tone of the visit, and lend to it a charm that is impossible to youth.

A thoroughbred lady knows when her presence is a blessing and a pleasure to young people, and also when it serves as a flaming sword, which is disguised as an elegant woman of society. If the mother be a superior lady, and remain to absorb the conversation, she is either one or the other—a charm or a protector—and it is for the visitor to decide for himself in which character she hovers about her daughter during

his visits. The earlier he discovers her reasons for remaining, the better for all.

If a gentleman have sisters or daughters, he will consider these rigid rules none too severe. The man who quarrels with them, or with their enforcement, is just the person for whom they were established by those who, by reason of superior social position, experience, and refined culture, have combined to ordain them.

VIII.

MORNING RECEPTIONS AND KETTLE-DRUMS.

A RECEPTION may be a very ceremonious entertainment, with elaborate and expensive appointments, or it may be very simple and yet altogether elegant. The latter style of receiving has borrowed an English name, by which it is frequently called, to distinguish it from those more costly hospitalities which are becoming less and less fashionable in New York every succeeding season. It is often mentioned as a "kettle-drum," because it is said to have originated in garrisons, where officers and their wives, who have been accustomed to elegances, are compelled to extend only the most informal of courtesies, owing to the necessary limitations of camp life. They cannot provide sumptuous refreshments and expensive table service when they invite their friends upon stated occasions. The fascinations which this enforced absence of

troublesome and costly elaborateness possesses for civilians, who sometimes imagine that they are compelled to bear the many burdens of ostentation, have combined with the picturesqueness of these social enjoyments in camp to bring the "kettle-drum" into general favor with fashionable people.

The name "kettle-drum" signifies to a New-Yorker a light entertainment, with *demi-toilette* for both ladies and gentlemen. It is claimed that a drum-head often served instead of a tea-tray at these delightful garrison sociabilities in England and the East Indies; and since this informal service of tea has become popular in metropolitan society, some of our ladies have provided fanciful suggestions of these original afternoon parties in camp. Sometimes a tiny drum is beaten at intervals in the vicinity of the tea-table, where a lady of the household, or a favorite friend, presides.

Sometimes a bright young lady, costumed prettily as a *vivandière*, sits or stands by the tea-urn as its presiding genius; but these picturesque additions to an ordinary afternoon recep-

tion are not to be considered in the light of customs, but simply as pretty caprices, calculated to give vivacity to the entertainment, which any lady may adopt.

Many leaders of society choose the "kettle-drum" style of welcoming their friends, because their husbands dislike general gatherings, or are too weary or too absorbed to assist in entertaining evening guests. It is simply an "at home" in the daytime, or, as some ladies have lately styled it, "a social *matinée*," the word *matinée* by general license being interpreted to mean occasions by daylight as distinguished from those at night.

An elaborate reception is preceded by a visit or a call by card upon all acquaintances to whom the hostess is indebted for formal civilities. Her invitations are issued in her own name, with the addition beneath it, if she chooses, of daughter or friend, provided she proposes to be assisted in her entertainment by another, or if she desires it to be understood as an introduction of a stranger into her circle of society, or possibly it is a compliment to a

favorite acquaintance. The following are the usual forms of card:

18 West Moore Street.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN TALLMAN
request the pleasure of your presence
on Wednesday evening, December tenth,
from eight until eleven o'clock.

Or,

No. 25 North Street.

MRS. R. H. GOODMAN.

MISS GOODMAN.

Wednesday, December tenth.
Tea at four o'clock.

The "at home" is seldom engraved upon a reception-card for a simple entertainment, unless it be after a wedding. If a series of receptions are to be given, the lower line on the left of the card may be simply:

Tuesdays in December,
from three to seven o'clock.

These cards are sent in two envelopes; but less formal receptions or "at homes" may be signified by writing the day or days and hours

for receiving upon the left corners of visiting-cards, and possibly adding "kettle-drum." These are sent by post in a single wrapper. If two or more ladies are to receive with the hostess, their cards may or may not be inclosed with that of the lady of the house, according to inclination.

At the ceremonious or grand reception, a carpet, and perhaps an awning, is stretched from the door to the curbstone. A serving-man, in dress suit and fresh white thread gloves, stands by the halting-place of the carriage, to open the carriage-door, and to assist those ladies to alight who are accompanied by no gentleman or no footman of their own. The luxury of an extra man upon the box of the carriage to perform this service is an exception rather than a rule in New York; therefore the entertainer is careful to provide a person to do this service for her guests. In afternoon gatherings, gentlemen are seldom able to accompany the ladies of their households, therefore this serving-man is in greater request at the arrival and dismissal of carriages than he is at evening entertainments.

He provides the alighting lady with the number of her carriage as it is fixed in the order of her arrival, and the same is given to her driver, so that he shall know when she asks for him, and he is called for by this very useful and, indeed, necessary out-of-door attendant.

Another man, or it may just as well be a woman, awaits the arrivals, and opens the door without waiting for the bell to be touched. She receives the cards of the entering guests and directs the ladies to a dressing-room; also the gentleman, if he happens to be chivalric enough to present himself in the daytime; but, more than likely, they will not desire to overlook or rearrange their toilets. Few ladies care to lay aside their handsome visiting-wraps and dress bonnets, and the gentleman may retain his hat in his hand, if he chooses, unless there be a crush, when safety to the form of this important article of dress, as well as convenience to the crowd, suggests that he deposit it in the room appointed for its care.

A lady guest enters the *salon* on the gentleman's right side, or, if she be a chaperon, and

there be no gentleman, she approaches the hostess with her charge at her right, as if she were a gentleman. After a very brief interchange of the usual salutations and inquiries, the guests pass on to give place to others. It is very inconsiderate to engage in any conversation beyond this with those who are receiving.

Half an hour is quite long enough to remain in crowded drawing-rooms. It is kindness to the hostess to make a space for her many acquaintances, and it is possible discomfort to remain, unless there is some special entertainment, such as vocal music or the dance. The gentleman sometimes accepts coffee, etc., but he is a rare man who so dishonors his dinner as to eat at a mid-afternoon party. A lady seldom refuses an ice or oysters, and not infrequently she partakes heartily of a sumptuous entertainment. Of course the table has been spread with delicacies, that they might be eaten by whoever could enjoy them, and it is altogether proper to eat; but, that few of our fashionables accustom themselves to accept rich food at this hour of the day, is all the information intended to be

conveyed by these remarks. It is possible that an indifference to food in the intervals of regular luncheons and dinners has assisted to popularize a simpler provision for the palate at receptions.

If there be dancing, as is provided not infrequently in very large houses, and is sometimes mentioned on the corner of the card, a band of music is stationed as remotely as possible from the hostess, so that it shall not interfere with her conversation, and the ladies and gentlemen who are fond of dancing of course seek the dressing-room, in which to deposit their inconvenient outer wraps, etc. The hostess cannot leave her position to dance, but her daughters may do so during the latter part of the afternoon. It is not uncommon for the hostess to invite a few young people by special note, to remain and dance after the hours mentioned in the invitation, the refreshment-table providing them with an informal dinner. She may, if she chooses, make this request verbally during the reception.

Ices, coffee, chocolate, tea, or wine, with fancy cakes or dainty sandwiches, etc., etc., may

be passed to such guests as do not care to go to the refreshment-room for more substantial luxuries.

At a "kettle-drum," after the formal salutations are made, if there be not a crowd of guests, a tray with tea, cream, and sugar is presented almost immediately by a domestic, and another servant offers simple refreshments to accompany it. If the rooms be filled, the guest is asked to seek tea at the table where it is served. Some hostesses invite a bevy of young society girls of their acquaintance to serve her guests with tea and refreshments, and to entertain them while they are eating; and they often wear coquettish caps, pretty aprons, and short dresses, to show their slippers and gay stockings.

It is not expected that a ceremonious leave-taking will precede the departure of guests, especially if the drawing-rooms are still well filled. The omission of this formality is not only not a discourtesy, but it is a real kindness. If the reception be a grand and elaborate one, after-calls are *de rigueur;* but if it be an informal one, a "kettle-drum," or a social *matinée*, after-calls

are not expected. Indeed, this reception is scarce more than a condensation of calls. Those who are not able to be present send their cards on the day, and if possible during the reception hours. They are laid upon the hall-table with those of persons who have been present. In case of a series of receptions, none of which are attended, a card must be sent in to the last one without fail, and some ladies and gentlemen carry their courtesy so far as to send their cards on each day, or evening, to prove that, though absent, they do not forget the hospitality extended to them.

While the reception has been arranged for the daytime in most circles, it is also becoming quite fashionable for the evening, and its simplicity of detail, etc., spare it from the burdens of a party. Social gatherings of this sort prevail quite generally among people of literary and artistic tastes, when the entire evening may be spent in conversation, music, or reading. Hats, bonnets, and wraps are laid aside, but the costume is not full evening toilet for the ladies. The gentleman should be in full evening dress,

recent custom making this proper for all evening gatherings. Gloves for gentlemen are not incumbent, as they once were; the latest practice being to omit them on all occasions save dancing parties, in obedience to the custom of English gentlemen, whose exemplar is the Prince of Wales. White gloves are not appropriate at these gatherings for either ladies or gentlemen.

The hostess rarely introduces people at these large receptions, partly because she is too closely occupied in receiving her guests, and partly because it is not fashionable to do so unless requested. There are those who would consider it an unpleasantly officious act on the part of the hostess to thus insist upon acquainting them with unknown, and possibly unheard-of, individuals. The accepted formalities of introduction in New York are fully explained in another chapter, and referred to in this connection only to explain why they are even less frequently performed at large and general receptions than at parties, and also to suggest that they should seldom be expected or asked for in crowded assemblies.

IX.

GIVING AND ATTENDING PARTIES, BALLS, AND GERMANS.

THE evening party almost invariably includes dancing, and yet it is considered very proper to direct that the word *dancing* be engraved on the corner of the invitation, and also the hour of its commencing. The ball is, of course, an assemblage exclusively for the dance. This amusement and a substantial supper constitute a ball. The hour mentioned on the invitation is usually much later for a ball than it is for a party. The former ranges from half-past nine to eleven o'clock, though there are few entertainments in New York which commence so late as the time last mentioned. From nine to half-past ten are the favorite hours named in notes of invitation to balls. These notes are sent out in two envelopes, from ten to twenty days in advance of the festivity. The post is the safest messenger for

them, unless the lady issuing the cards can trust her own servant. A single lost card often counts for a lost friend on these grand occasions.

The party note or card is issued about a week or ten days prior to the appointed evening; and unless it be a very formal occasion, a single envelope is sufficient wrapping. Of course the post can deliver them. The hour mentioned ranges from nine to half-past.

The ball demands the fullest of toilets which the season admits, for both ladies and gentlemen. A few residences only have ball-rooms attached to them, because the limitations of a city prevent them from being numerous. If there is no ballroom, and the drawing-room is used instead, a linen cloth is stretched over the carpet, and the furniture is mostly removed. Growing flowers are arranged wherever they can be effectively placed; garlands are hung picturesquely, and cut blossoms give forth their fragrance, and add color and beauty as lavishly as the hostess chooses to provide. The supper-room is arranged with choice articles of food, both cold and hot, and is usually opened at half-

past twelve or one o'clock. But there are light refreshments, also drinks to satisfy the varied tastes of a large company, such as coffee, chocolate, lemonade, *bouillon;* and most likely punches and wines are accessible during the entire ball. Waltzing goes on at intervals until supper is announced, and immediately after the German cotillon is danced. Square dances, so called, are now almost wholly out of fashion.

The hostess sends out her invitations to either ball or party after calling by card or in person upon all her proposed guests to whom she is socially indebted. They are handsomely engraved in script, and issued in her own name for a ball, but in both her own and her husband's name for a party.

The following is the fashionable formula for the ball:

MRS. FARQUHAR ALEXANDER
requests the pleasure of your presence
on Thursday evening, December fifth,
at half-past nine o'clock.

Dancing. 28 Nottingham Place.

The party invitation not only indicates an

earlier hour for arriving, but instead of the simple word *dancing* in the left corner it may be engraved *dancing at eleven.*

Of course this invitation must be accepted or declined within two or three days after its reception. The form of acceptance or regret is written in the name or names of the party invited:

MR. AND MRS. R. V. TORRINGTON
accept with pleasure [or decline with sincere regret]
MRS. FARQUHAR ALEXANDER'S
kind invitation for January third.

Nottingham Place.

An awning to shelter the guests from their carriage to the vestibule, and a carpet for them to tread upon from the curbstone to the hall, are provided at all balls, parties, and so-called "Germans"—(a term sometimes used to designate a party in which this dance is the main feature)—and, indeed, wherever ladies in full dress are expected. A serving-man is stationed at the proper place to open the carriage-door, number the carriage, and give the figures that it represents, printed upon a card, in the

order of its arrival, to both driver and occupants; so that when it is wanted it can be easily secured, without the unpleasantness of hearing the name of its owner called out through the darkness. Another servant opens the vestibule door without waiting for the bell to be sounded, and he immediately directs the guests to their respective dressing-rooms. Now, just at this point arises a question which has long been in dispute, and it may be settled at once: "Which side of the stairway, the rail or the wall, should be accorded to a lady?"

It has been discussed by gentlemen, as if it were a matter for them to decide, which it is not, by any means. Such ladies as have been given their choice have invariably said: "Permit me to take your left arm with my right hand, and it does not matter whether it is wall or rail that I am nearest in going up or down stairs. I can better care for myself than you can care for me."

Sometimes the turning or curving of the staircase so narrows the steps on the rail side as to make them dangerous to heedless feet. In

such a case a lady must cling to the arm of her escort, or else clasp the rail with her fresh and tightly-fitting gloves, which last she is never willing to do if she can avoid it.

Of course a gentleman cannot always wait to examine the architectural peculiarities of a stairway before he decides which arm will best satisfy the lady whom he desires to benefit. He is safe in offering her his left. If she declines assistance, she will choose which part of the stairs she likes best to ascend, and the gentleman will precede her by two or three steps. On going down he is always slightly in advance of her. This arrangement settles the question satisfactorily to the ladies, and gentlemen really have no right to a choice in this matter.

A lady may, and, indeed, she usually does, carry her bouquet (and her fan, also, if it be not suspended by a *châtelaine*, which it usually is) in the hand which rests for support upon the arm of her escort, thus leaving her left free to protect her train, provided she desires to lift it from the tread of heedless or crowding feet.

The wife enters a drawing-room on the hus-

band's right, or, if the lady be not married, then the eldest lady occupies this position, provided there be more than one accompanying a gentleman. Oftener than otherwise, the lady of to-day does not lean upon the arm of her escort, but advances into the *salon* unassisted. Indeed, the ancient custom is falling into disuse in our fashionable society.

The lady precedes a gentleman by a step or two, when entering or passing out from an apartment, provided she does not retain his arm. In the highest circles in France, the lady enters several steps in advance of the gentleman at a formal reception. Our custom of precedence is not quite so pronounced as that. Possibly, the French lady is permitted this form of superiority in society because she really possesses so little genuine consideration elsewhere.

After the usual greetings with the hostess, the guests walk about, find friends, etc., until the young ladies have accepted partners for the dance. An applicant for this honor and pleasure is always careful to recognize the office and authority of the chaperon when making his re-

quest. This is considered no more respect than is due to the lady who has kindly undertaken the care of a young lady at a ball.

The gentleman returns the lady directly to the care of her married or her older lady friend, as soon as the dance is finished. He may linger here to converse with her, but not elsewhere, according to the usages of our best society.

It is customary for both ladies to visit the supper-room with the gentleman with whom the young lady has last been dancing, and with whom she may be still chatting at the side of her *chaperon* when this welcome moment has arrived: of course, provided he is at liberty to offer his services to them. No observable disinclination to accept this escort is possible on her part, no matter what previous anticipations she may have indulged. A private ball is not a small *coterie* to which a lady may have been escorted without a *chaperon*, by an intimate gentleman friend, to whom she is to look for the civilities of the supper-table. A ball is too formal a place for any one to indulge in personal preferences of any kind. Even if a gentleman be of the

lady's own party, and went to the ball in the same carriage with her, she cannot refuse the offer of another gentleman's arm to the supper-room in company with her mamma or her married lady friend. A gentleman is not as free as the lady at this moment. If he accompanies a lady or party of ladies, he must first be certain that they are properly attended at this important moment, before he can offer his services to others. If it be possible, he is near enough to them at this hour to offer his services to them, but this is not always convenient. As at these entertainments there is provided what the English call a "stand-up supper," the gentleman escort is careful to see that his ladies are fully served before he refreshes himself. A lady cannot accept the attentions of any other gentleman in the supper-room, except the host, or some other member of his family. If her escort be forgetful of her requirements, she must ask a servant only for whatever she may want.

These formalities of a private ball apply also to a public entertainment for dancing, and they must be followed in the latter case with even

severer strictness. Among the few liberties which a young lady enjoys at a public entertainment is the privilege of refusing to dance with such applicants for this honor as she chooses to disregard. Of course she does this courteously and gently; but one must be a young lady to understand the full delight of this permission. If she refuses an invitation to dance at a private ball, as has been mentioned, she loses the dance altogether, and must sit all through its bewildering and inviting music. Balls terminate by two or three o'clock.

At a party, dancing seldom begins until after supper, as the cards will suggest. Conversation, music, etc., occupy the earlier part of the evening, and the dancing is ended and all departures are made by one o'clock at the latest.

The "German" differs very little in its etiquette from that of the party. The leader of the dance is to be selected with discretion by the hostess, and the favors, which are always provided for the dancers, are chosen with individual and refined taste, always avoiding ostentatious display. The hostess is attentive to the ladies,

observing if any timid or unattractive guest receives a noticeably small number of these trifles. With tact she quietly provides her with dances that shall make all favors as nearly equal as is possible upon such occasions of competition.

Generally the early part of the evening is spent with the waltz, and after supper the "German." Of course, nobody gives a "German" without being familiar with all the necessary and peculiar *etceteras*, which it is not in the province of etiquette to explain. The card of invitation is usually like that of a party, "The German" being engraved on the left-hand corner, with the hour when the dance is to commence. This mention of the time for opening this peculiar dance will be appreciated by all who are familiar with its requirements. If a *coterie* meets for practising the "German," it is customary for each lady member to invite all the members to her own house in turn, and as many other guests as is agreed upon by by-laws, from among her own particular friends. The cards of the *coterie* are engraved in script, and the monogram selected for it is upon the envelope. The follow-

ing is the customary form, the card being issued in the name of the young lady's mother :

MRS. _____

requests the pleasure of your presence
at a meeting of "the German,"
Tuesday evening, _____
at half-past eight o'clock.

Calls to return thanks, offer congratulations, and for inquiries, are made upon the hostess on the first of her regular reception days after receiving her hospitalities, or after being compelled to decline her courtesy. If she have no fixed time for receiving, a visit should be made, or cards left for her, within ten days after the festivity.

X.

DINNER GIVING AND DINING OUT.

THE history of an unknown civilization might be read in the bill of its fare, and in the forms of its feasting. We need not search beyond the conventionalities of the banquet to inform ourselves of the subtlest perfections of refined taste, or of a supreme barbarism. Between these two extremes stretch vast and varied areas of lessening skill, or of decreasing vulgarity, no grade of which is indistinguishable. Individual awkwardness and stupidity fail to exercise the refinements of the era, and by this test the measurement of its advancement toward superiority is exact and trustworthy. Not that superior methods of eating are the highest of accomplishments by any means, but they are trustworthy indicators of indwelling tendencies and developments.

There are those who reject the highest forms

of social etiquette through an assumed superiority to fixed rules; but an isolated case of absence of good manners, and of high forms of conduct, proves nothing, and, as a modern writer declares, "should be attributed to a personal incapacity for appreciating them."

A tendency toward originality in individual cases might increase the charm of social intercourse, and ultimately lead to superior and more attractive formalities; but we have arrived at a sufficiently excellent standard in etiquette to satisfy the most fastidious of dinner-givers and diners-out, especially when we remember that aiming at the possible in these critical affairs is a dangerous experiment. Inharmony is never beautiful, although originality may be, and safety is to be found only in established formalities.

Pendent as we have been between the English style of entertaining, which is a massive solidity, and the lighter and more graceful French, we are no longer vibrating. We have rested ourselves upon a standard that is largely our own, although, like our legal statutes, our social regulations have been formulated from such of

the habits of both nations as are adaptable to ourselves. As we had neither royalty nor rank to decide these matters for us, the time consumed in the adjustment of our social affairs was, very naturally, extended through many years. We became weary of being asked, "How do you do these things in America?" when we had no proper reply to make. "I suppose you have a best society, and I would like, you know, to understand how you regulate it. Does anybody possess a right of precedence at a dinner-party?" inquired a small, but not intentionally impertinent, "my lord" not many years since. "I don't suppose you feel settled in social matters," he went on to say, as if he intended good-naturedly to apologize for all the social barbarities which he had traversed the sea to witness, and the entire absence of which would doubtless have disappointed him.

"Indeed, we do have a best society, and most excellent it is, too, because we recognize superiority without consulting a Doomsday-book. We know exactly what to do for ourselves and for our visitors," was the prompt answer. Of

course this reply was part pride and part truth, and the former sentiment was made just sore enough to compel us to seek after a protection against future hurts of this sort, which might be inflicted by the semi-contempt of a traditional nobility.

The lady who purposes to give a dinner-party, or a series of parties, is exceedingly careful to catalogue all the names to whom she desires to extend the hospitalities of her house. From all these she selects and groups those who will affect each other pleasantly, either by reason of positive sympathy, or by an agreeable contrast of tastes, interests, or sentiments. The differences in social conditions often go far toward deciding upon the groups, but latterly intellectual attainments have established a higher grade of position, and the combinations of guests are based upon mental accomplishments, instead of family connection. In either case the etiquette is the same. As we have no real distinctions of birth, and find ourselves affected by the traditional customs of our ancestry, we too often hunt after a lion or a lioness as a motive for a

feast, because this person or personage will make the formalities of the occasion less difficult of settlement. This hero may not be eminent to a startling degree, but all the same his presence settles beyond question who is to go in to dinner with the host or hostess, and this decision assists the timid entertainers amazingly. Sometimes it is the birthday of the honored guest, the return of a bridal party, a reëntrance into society after an illness, or following a sorrowful retirement from gayety; or it may be the celebration of an achievement, literary, artistic, political, or financial; but being a decided something to distinguish a single individual, and to hang upon him or her, a reason for receiving precedence over all others on this occasion of feasting, she is escorted by the host to the table, and placed at his right hand; but if the honored guest be a gentleman, or the husband of the honored lady guest, he goes in to dinner with the hostess, and sits upon her right hand.

If there really is no person to whom an especial attention is to be shown, the eldest lady (provided she is old enough to be proud of her

many years), the wife of the highest official, or of the most eminent scholar, or the one who is the greatest stranger, is offered the arm of the host.

To give the dinner in honor of some person, or "to meet" a particular party, as the invitation should explain (provided the guest be not unmistakably famous), has an especial advantage in that it settles who shall, and who need not, be present. This is an agreeable and easy method of disposing of our first difficulty when issuing invitations. Those who are not invited, immediately understand, by lack of their own affiliations, why they were not included on this particular occasion, and they indulge in no unpleasant speculations about the matter. They know that, when a fitter occasion occurs, their names will be properly grouped, according to their tastes and associations. No explanation is necessary from the giver of a dinner to friends who are omitted. The invitation itself is its own interpretation, should the card fall under the eyes of those who, but for the "to meet" upon it, might feel hurt by a suspicion of neglect.

It is the customary style of those who give frequent dinner-parties to order their cards engraved with a blank left for the written insertion of the name of the guests, also a place indicated for the date, to be filled in at pleasure. Upon an extra card, which is enclosed in the same envelope, is written the following form:

TO MEET

MR. LIVINGSTONE LIVINGSTONE,

Of New Orleans.

If the dinner be a very grand and ceremonious entertainment, and given to express respect for a well-known individual, and there is time for premeditated formalities, the name of the honored guest will be engraved upon the card of invitation, and sent out eight or ten days in advance of the evening. The replies should be immediate, so that vacancies may be filled. If there is the slightest doubt about being able to be present, the invitation must be declined. If it be accepted, and an insurmountable obstacle comes in between the guest and the dinner, instant explanations must be made, as an empty chair at a

feast is a depressing object, and usually leaves some lady without an escort, or some gentleman alone.

Invitations to a dinner are always given in the name of both host and hostess. If it be an engraved card or note, the name of host and hostess occupies one line, extending across the card; the request follows, in smaller script, with the name of the invited person or persons written across in a blank space arranged by the engraver. Below this are the date and hour of the dinner.

Until very recently, the initials R. S. V. P. (*Répondez s'il vous plait*) have been engraved upon all formal cards, but they are less and less frequently seen. To thus ask, or even remind, a lady or gentleman that an invitation should be answered is, to say the least, a faint reproach upon their breeding. All refined people who are accustomed to the best social forms are fully aware that it would be an unpardonable negligence to omit replying to such an invitation for a single day. Although it is not intended as an insult to an acquaintance's intelligence, it is one,

nevertheless. The only place where R. S. V. P. may be written, with strict etiquette and propriety, is to an informal note, which the receiver might otherwise place among the unconsidered trifles of social life, but which, for some adequate reason, the sender desires to have answered.

An engraved request sent to an acquaintance is usually in one of the following styles:

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD BELLPORT
request the pleasure of
_____ *company*
at dinner on _____
_____ 187 *at* _____ *o'clock.*
No. 10 Capulet Avenue.

Or,

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD BELLPORT
request the pleasure of
_____
company at dinner,
on _____
at seven o'clock.
No. 10 Capulet Avenue.

(The word "company" is used in an invita-

tion to dinner, but "presence" is preferred in a card that invites a guest to a wedding.)

The day of the week is written in letters, also the hour; but the day of the month may be in numerals if preferred.

If it be an engraved note, a monogram or a crest may be placed at the centre of the top of the sheet; but, if it be a card, it is considered more refined to place this device upon the envelope only. Monograms and ciphers are oftener used than crests, partly because we are really entitled to no crest in this country; but many superior people retain this family emblem through respect for their ancestry, and without a thought of arrogance or an atom of unjustifiable pride.

If the dinner is given in honor of some noted person or persons, the following is the engraved form of invitation:

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD BELLPORT
request the pleasure of

---

company at dinner, on Tuesday,
January 20th, at seven o'clock, to meet the
HON. MR. AND MRS. BROADTOP.
No. 10 Capulet Avenue.

The following form is used in writing an immediate reply:

MR. AND MRS. HOBART HARRISON
accept with pleasure
MR. AND MRS. HOWARD BELLPORT'S
invitation to dinner, at seven o'clock, Tuesday evening, January 20th.

If unable to accept, the refusal must be worded in a manner expressive of disappointment. The following is the prevailing style:

MR. AND MRS. HOBART HARRISON
regret that a previous engagement
[or illness, or an unfortunate event]
prevents the acceptance of
MR. AND MRS. HOWARD BELLPORT'S
invitation for Tuesday evening, January 20th.

Of course the formality or informality of the acquaintance between the parties regulates the method and clearness of this declining of the invitation.

If the note sent in reply be bordered with black, that tells its own story; but there are many things which may not be mentioned, but which make gayeties unwelcome at times, and

every lady with a sweet temper will receive declinations to her invitations in the full belief that the regret is genuine.

To be prompt, but not too early, to dinner, is a rigid necessity that requires no explanation. Five or ten minutes are the customary interval between arriving and the dinner hour. Earlier, the hostess may not be able to be in waiting to welcome her guests. Later than this, time for introductions, and arrangements for escorts to the table, may not be sufficient. If the party be chosen from those who are already acquainted with each other, it is customary for cards to be handed on a tray to each gentleman by the servant at the door. He will select the one with his own and a lady's name written upon it, and, after the usual greetings with host and hostess are over, the guest seeks his partner and awaits the announcement of dinner. If the guests be unfamiliar with each other, the lady, when receiving them, suggests to each gentleman his partner, and the host presents him to this lady, and also informs him if his place at the table be at the right of host or hostess. This plan les-

sens the difficulty of finding assigned positions at table.

Cards, either plain or ornamental, according to the taste or the ceremoniousness of the dinner, are laid at each lady's and gentleman's plate, with their names upon them. The *menu* card is usually hidden beneath it.

The dinner is announced by the chief waiter. He stands at the entrance to the drawing-room which opens toward the dining-room, and bows to the host. The latter is alert, anticipating this silent information. He immediately offers his left arm to the lady-in-chief for this particular occasion. She may be the wife of the eldest gentleman, or the especially honored guest, as before explained. He proceeds first, and his guests follow him to the dining-room, his wife entering last with the gentleman entitled to most consideration. Each pair find their assigned position by the card which awaits them, assisted by the information previously furnished by the host in regard to the side of the table chosen for them. This is done as quietly as possible, as nothing is less elegant than a bustling manner.

The *menu* is not any longer printed upon the dinner-card, as it is customary to keep the latter as a *souvenir* of the banquet. To make this card worthy of the guest, individual taste, and not infrequently much money, is expended upon it.

The ladies and gentlemen stand by their places until the hostess is seated, when each lady, whose chair has already been conveniently placed for her by her escort, also seats herself, and the gentlemen follow the example immediately. A gentleman offers his left arm to the lady whom he is to lead in to dinner. This leaves his right hand free to arrange her chair as she approaches the table. He places her at his right hand.

If there be an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and they are arranged at table in pairs, the host and hostess cannot sit exactly opposite to each other, provided the table be filled. This difference in the *vis-à-vis* of hostess and host is of slight consequence when a dinner is served *à la Russe*, or even if it be not, because the centres, instead of the ends, of a dining-table are usually occupied by the enter-

tainers, so that they may be nearer to all their guests, to make conversation easier. If there are vacant places, they are at the remotest positions from the heads of the house.

The soup is passed to each one, who eats it, or pretends to do so. After soup, the guest may accept or refuse whatever follows, as the *menu* affords a knowledge of what may be expected.

If wine be provided and the guest does not approve of it, a private table is not a suitable place for expressing individual convictions. He should receive or turn the wine in the different glasses sparingly, and make no comment. If toasts are drank, let him lift his glass, and be courteous. At a public dinner, the freedom of the occasion permits a noticeable rejection of wines; but to accept private hospitality affords no liberty of criticism upon the conduct of the host. Both reproof and commendation are alike vulgar and discourteous. As formal dinners are now served *à la Russe* entirely, the intellectual entertainment is less difficult of management than when the host and hostess used the soup-ladle and the carving-knife. The fruits and

nuts being a part of the table decoration, and already picturesquely arranged, the feast should proceed as smoothly and deliberately as did a familiar *minuet* in our granddames' *salons*. The hosts have really nothing to do but to be agreeable.

When the dinner is over, the hostess bows to the lady at the right of the host, rises, and all rise also. The gentlemen either stand until the ladies have left the apartment, or conduct them to the door, and then return. It is a graceful courtesy to escort the ladies to the drawing-room, but this is not incumbent. The ladies having withdrawn, the gentlemen who smoke light their cigars, or withdraw with the host to another apartment, for that purpose. In either instance their absence from the drawing-room should not be a prolonged one. Custom is abridging the after-dinner smoking as time progresses.

Coffee is usually served at table after the dessert, but not infrequently it is served in the drawing-room a half an hour or so later. The hostess, in the latter case, usually sits by the

coffee-urn, and the gentlemen may carry the coffee-cups to the ladies, followed by a servant, who bears a tray, upon which are sugar, cream, and often a handsome, low cut-glass caraffe of brandy.

After coffee, any guest may take leave, and it is not expected that the latest lingerer will remain longer than two hours after dinner. If the party be not likely to separate directly, and a gentleman or lady is compelled to leave early, it is proper to speak to the hostess of this necessity before dinner, if possible, or at some early time when unobserved, and then leave quietly and unnoticed, without formal *adieux*, as the departure of one person often disturbs the pleasure of those remaining. The hostess understands unspoken leave-takings if she be familiar with New York customs. This polite withdrawal is one of the many pleasant habits taken from Parisian etiquette.

Strict etiquette demands that a call be made upon the hostess by each guest within a week. If she have a fixed receiving-day within the time, it is the proper occasion for returning

thanks and inquiring after the lady's health. If that particular day cannot be made convenient, cards left in person (right side or right-hand upper corner turned over) for each grown member of the family is accepted instead of a call.

As we are a business people, gentlemen without wives, mothers, or sisters to carry their cards for them, are permitted by the strictest approving etiquette to send them by post. Of course this is only done when a call in person, or by the hand of a relative, is impossible.

A lady goes to a dinner-party in whatever is considered full toilette for that season, and the gentlemen also. Gloves are removed after being seated at the table, and they need not be replaced again during the evening.

XI.

BREAKFASTS, LUNCHEONS, AND SUPPERS.

A COMPLIMENTARY and formal breakfast is usually given by a Parisian at the hours which are customary for this meal when eaten in private by fashionable people. The time varies only slightly in different elegant establishments, vibrating between half-past nine and eleven o'clock.

Guests to an exceedingly formal breakfast in our city are bidden at twelve, but really social breakfasts, such as are often extended to a stranger in town whom a friend desires to present to his or her own immediate associates, is seldom later than half-past ten, and a half-hour earlier is the time oftenest mentioned. Of course, this is a real breakfast, and not one with at least two private luncheons preceding it.

Eager as some of our citizens may have been to follow the examples of nobly-born foreign

society, when it came to deciding upon the hour for our breakfasts our human nature revolted against such a tormenting postponement of this nominally first meal of the day. Not but that we all know that the hospitality called a breakfast, which is arranged for twelve o'clock, is simply a disarrangement of the usual order of the names of one's meals, and possibly a reversal of their *menu* also; but our social code rejects English etiquette in this entertainment most decidedly.

It is not improbable that this early and really charming method of entertaining a friend may become a movable feast, and its time be fixed at a still earlier hour. Macaulay said: "Dinner-parties are mere formalities; but you invite a man to breakfast because you want to see him;" but then Macaulay really belonged to the nobility of letters rather than to that rank which lives to support its titles.

Both gentlemen and ladies may be guests at the breakfast-table, but ladies only usually receive invitations to a luncheon-party. The breakfast is a less troublesome entertainment,

and far more social and enjoyable than a dinner. People meet before the occupations of the day have wearied them, or its pleasures have given birth to satiety, that most appalling of grievances to the lady or gentleman upon whom society makes constant demands. Business gentlemen can enjoy these semi-early gatherings but seldom; but to literary persons, and to men of leisure, they are as convenient to attend as an evening-party; and possibly to the former they are more acceptable, because the night-time has become, through inherited tastes and tendencies, the too common hour for working with the brain.

Invitations to a breakfast, unless it be a grandly important mid-day affair, are written, and thus need not be issued more than five days in advance of the entertainment. Indeed, a breakfast may be almost *impromptu*, and not shock the social dogmas of the very severest of our formalists. The style of this note may be quite as informal as any brief but friendly letter, or it may be the lady's visiting-card which conveys the request, if this card be engraved after

the customary form prevailing in New York, with the address in the right-hand lower corner, and the ordinary day for receiving callers upon the left. Below the lady's name may be written:

BREAKFAST AT TEN O'CLOCK,
January 12th.

If another than the usual "at home" day be preferred, an ink line may be drawn through the engraved day of the week, and the following form is written upon the card:

BREAKFAST, FRIDAY, AT TEN O'CLOCK,
January 12th.

Numerals are written upon a card, but they are not engraved, except it be the number of a residence.

This breakfast should never be elaborate, but it cannot be too dainty in its food, or in the appointments of the table. The best of everything, prepared in the choicest of styles, but nothing heavy, nor excessive in quantity, should be prepared. Walking costumes are worn by both gentlemen and ladies, also visiting-gloves,

which are removed at table. The descent from the dressing-room and greetings between the hostess and guest are just the same as at a dinner-party.

If ladies and gentlemen are equal in number, the hostess is careful to arrange for partners at table; and, in case there are more than eight guests, cards are placed at the proper plates, where every person will find his or her name awaiting him or her. If the sexes be unequal in numbers, ladies are informed of their lady-partners by the hostess, and they seek their assigned positions at table as usual.

The host conducts the eldest lady, or the one entitled to his highest consideration because she is a stranger, a restored invalid, a recent bride, or is made for any noticeable reason temporarily, perhaps, the person to receive this mark of respect. If there is no host present, the lady of the house leads the way to the breakfast-room, accompanied by her most honored guest, either gentleman or lady.

The food is served from the sideboard, or upon the table in courses, according to taste or

convenience, and the only way in which the mere formalities of a breakfast differ from those of a dinner are that the coffee, chocolate, and tea service is attended by the hostess, in front of which she sits, and the courses are less in number. Guests depart within half an hour after leaving the breakfast-table.

After-calls of formality are not expected after a breakfast given in this simple style. The grand and formal breakfast demands handsome, but not evening toilettes for the ladies, and morning or frock coats for gentlemen, with light-colored trousers, and waistcoats to correspond with the coat. The latter may, however, wear white vests, light kid gloves, and colored neck-ties.

The gentlemen are arranged to escort lady guests according to cards, which they find awaiting them in their dressing-room, or which are offered to them on a tray by a servant. If the ladies selected for them be strangers, they should ask the hostess to present them directly after having exchanged the usual salutations with her. When breakfast is announced, the gentleman

offers his left arm, just as he would at a dinner-party (the right arm is reserved for almost all attentions to a lady, except to escort her to the table).

The guests follow the host in such order as the number makes convenient. The gentleman finds his own and the lady's seat by the card upon the table. The ladies, with the assistance of their cavaliers, seat themselves; the gentlemen then follow their example, when all are seated.

The table is served with artistically-prepared delicacies; but there are few or none of the heavy substantials of a dinner provided for an elegant breakfast.

There are a few ladies who decline to preside over their coffee-urns for large breakfast-parties, but most hostesses enjoy the domestic hospitality which this attention to her friends suggests.

The party rises at a signal from the hostess to her opposite lady guest, and all seek the drawing-room, to remain but a short time before taking leave.

A visit of thanks is rigorously insisted upon by etiquette after a grand party of this sort.

The first receiving-day of the hostess, or, if she have no appointed time for being at home, any appropriate hour within ten days, may be chosen for this very proper attention to one whose hospitalities have been accepted.

Suppers, as was mentioned, are gentlemen's parties, and from nine to ten o'clock is the usual time for them to be served. There are game suppers, fish suppers, wine suppers, and champagne suppers, each one of which differs in the appropriate supplies for the table. But the formalities of the occasion, or, rather, the informalities, are all of the same kind. The invitations may be made at interviews, by friendly notes, or by the host's visiting-card, with, written upon it,

SUPPER AT TEN O'CLOCK,
Saturday, January 20th.

If it is a fish supper, only little food except that which once lived in the water is provided; salads and fruits, without a sweet dessert, complete it, with the additions of coffee and such wines as the host chooses for his guests.

A game supper is confined almost strictly to

wild fowl, with wines and coffee; but the dessert may be pastry, creams, and *bonbons*.

A wine or champagne supper is made up of a variety of luxuries, and differs from the dinner only in the cold fillets of game, boned turkey, spiced fish, etc., instead of meats that are all hot. The dessert is of various rich compounds, that are delightful to the palate of the epicure, but which mean heaviness and headache in the morning.

One or two o'clock finds the party dispersed. They are usually called "bachelor suppers," but why this name is provided for this feast it is difficult to determine, because the most excellent and really wonderful suppers of this sort are sometimes given by married gentlemen.

XII.

OPERA AND THEATRE PARTIES, PRIVATE THEATRICALS, AND MUSICALES.

THESE entertainments belong peculiarly to the province of the wealthy, provided they are perfectly arranged. They are not uncommon among our wealthiest families; but they are more frequently given by bachelors, who have no homes to which they may invite guests, and thus cancel some of their obligations to households from which they have received courteous and special hospitalities.

If given by a bachelor, he first secures a matron to *chaperon* the young ladies of his proposed party. If she be his own kinswoman, all the better for the harmony of the affair. This selection spares him from the unpleasant perplexity of choosing from among the mammas of his young lady guests. He proffers his invitations in person, soliciting first the consent of the

mother that her daughter may be his guest for the evening, at the same time mentioning what married lady will accompany them, and also furnishing the names of the gentlemen who are invited to be present.

The dinner is usually given in a private parlor of some fashionable hotel or restaurant, or in the house of some friend. The usual dinner formalities (*see* "Dinner Giving and Dining Out") are followed, the matron of the party, of course, acting as hostess. The lady-guests, if not accompanied by father or brother, are usually attended by a waiting-woman, who returns home in the carriage to come back again for her mistress at the hour appointed, which is usually half-past twelve.

The dinner hour is usually six o'clock for this style of party. Retiring from the table the party proceeds to the opera in carriages furnished by the host; and the gentleman assigned as dinner escort to a lady accompanies her to the opera, where boxes have necessarily been secured, because the party is in full toilette.

After the opera or theatre, the guests return

to the banqueting-room for refreshments, and then separate, a gentleman accompanying each young lady, provided only her waiting-woman call for her with her carriage. If her father or a kinsman arrive in her carriage, the gentleman who has been her attendant during the evening escorts her to her conveyance. He calls upon her within three days to inquire for her health, or leaves his card, provided a visit be impossible to him.

The bachelor host is compelled, by the laws of our best society, to pay his respects and return thanks to mother and daughter within a week, for the honor and pleasure he has received from his lady-guests. The young ladies pay an early visit of thanks to the friend who so kindly *chaperoned* them at the late party.

A less elaborate, but scarcely less formal, affair is the opera or theatre party which includes only an after-supper. In this instance the host calls upon his anticipated guests, and, after receiving an acceptance of his invitation (which must also include a gentleman member of the family, or a near kinsman of the young

lady), he leaves entrance-tickets for the proposed entertainment. The party meet in the box or boxes, where the matron selected awaits them with their host.

After the theatre, the supper, which has been ordered in advance, is served to them at some fashionable resort, and the hour for returning home is decided upon by the matron of the evening. The host designates to each gentleman the lady he is to conduct to the table. The supper is not uncommonly followed by a few dances, but this is less often a part of the festivity at a restaurant parlor than when the bachelor receives his guests at the house of a friend.

The latter style of opera or theatre party is by far the most popular of the time, and is, of course, less expensive and troublesome to both host and guests. The more elaborate formalities, as was suggested, are only provided by the very rich, and mothers of refined daughters do not encourage ostentation. The customs of these costly pleasures are furnished only because an account of the etiquette of New York would be incomplete without mentioning them.

In the least elaborate of the two forms, the young ladies are expected to be as rigorously attentive to the duty they owe to their *chaperon* as if there had been a ceremonious dinner; and the host will as carefully follow the proper formalities of calling early upon the families of each of his guests as if he had given a banquet instead of a supper.

As club life among gentlemen tends more and more to postpone marriage, this method of entertaining is likely to increase in our city. Of course there is no objection to the custom of opera and theatre parties in their most refined forms and usages; but an hotel dinner and supper lack the charm which domestic hospitality should hold for our highly-bred people. Of course this custom diminishes the care which entertaining is likely to bring to the dinner-giving host and hostess, and it does not greatly increase the expenses of canceling social obligations. Eight, ten, or twelve guests are the customary numbers invited to such a festivity, the smallness of the circle or *coterie* adding much to its delights.

If these parties are given by a lady in her

own home, the invitations are issued by informal written notes in her own name, and the dinner almost invariably precedes the public amusement. After the opera or theatre, it is proper for her to invite her guests to a restaurant for a light refreshment, but she oftener than otherwise begs them to return to her own residence, where a dainty supper awaits them. A lady-guest may, however, excuse herself from this after-part of the hospitality if she pleases, and not give offense. Party calls follow in the usual manner.

If private theatricals or music is to be a part or all of the entertainment at a gentleman's residence, the word *theatricals*, or *musicale*, is written upon the left lower part of the card of invitation. If the pleasure be accepted, a prompt attendance is compulsory.

If dancing is to follow, the hour of its commencement is also mentioned. It may be written across the card of invitation in this wise:

Theatricals at eight o'clock: dancing at eleven.

If the company is desired to wear fancy dress, or be masked, the words *fancy dress*, or

bal masqué, may be written at the usual left lower side.

This announcement may be engraved if the party is to be an elaborate one, and its amusements may be prominently stated in a line of their own, extending through the centre of the invitation.

A character, or author's party, is one of our latest favorites. The name of the author from whom the characters are to be selected is engraved or written upon the card of invitation. After the host and hostess's names, and the usual request, it is customary to add:

In character from "Waverley,"

or from any other author whose heroes and heroines are familiar to general society, such as Dickens, Bulwer, etc. Invitations to a character party should be issued from three to four weeks in advance, to give ample time for refreshing the memory and preparing costumes. If the courtesy be accepted, it is rude to appear at the party in any other than a fitting character and costume, according to the host's desire.

XIII.

ETIQUETTE OF WEDDINGS.

HOWEVER hostile the aggressively independent American may be to conventionalities of all sorts, and deeply as his scorn of etiquette may have been planted and rooted, and vigorous as may be its present growths, marriages cannot be conducted without at least some little ceremony. There are formalities which cannot be escaped at weddings. Even at that simplest of services, a marriage between Quakers, the witnesses are compelled to sit in silence—that most awful of conventionalities to the person who abhors etiquette and ceremony—until one or the other of the two aspirants for a wedded life is moved by the spirit within to announce this intention audibly.

The law enforces a ceremony, and the gently-bred have thrown about this unpicturesque but jurisprudential formality certain beautiful and

refined customs, which, with harmonious variations, have been adopted by, and into, our best society. As the dress of the youthful bride is white, an artistic variation of the fashion of it is admissible, and even agreeable, but no one would mistake it for a garment intended for another festivity. Etiquette has, in the same spirit of liberality, established a formula for the celebration of marriages, and each bridal pair endeavors to vary and beautify these ceremonials by an individual and poetic charm, without really departing from those customs which time and long establishment have made venerable and impressive.

The announcement of an engagement of marriage has no rigid formality in New York, and yet a betrothal is made known to the friends of the promised pair in some pleasant manner. Sometimes a dinner-party is given by the family of the bride-elect, or it may be enjoyed at the home of the groom (when the bride and her immediate family must be present), and the host announces the agreeable intelligence just before rising from the feast, when a general out-

burst of good feeling and congratulation takes place.

Good-natured gossip does the rest for the social circle of both the gentleman and lady most interested. Congratulations by note speedily follow, also the sending of flowers to the lady, calls, etc.

Sometimes it is done by note from the mother of the bride, or from the bride herself to her very intimate friends. The groom does the same by his near and dear associates. Of course these notes receive immediate responses.

Among families who entertain generously, dinner, or evening parties for dancing, or for opera-going, are given to the engaged couple by their friends, and the plighted pair appear together and receive congratulations.

The friends of the bride call upon her, or leave cards, and, as an announcement of an engagement is made at no great distance from the date fixed for the marriage, the bride does not pay ceremonious visits in the interval. It is customary, however, for her to leave her last visiting-card in person at the doors of her

friends' residences at the time, or just before, her wedding invitations are distributed; but she does not enter, except it be to visit an invalid or an aged lady.

This last distribution of a proof of her remembrance is almost like a memorial, because the bride will not again use the name of her own family. Consequently this call before marriage is one of strict etiquette, which she cannot well escape.

Her wedding-cards are sent out at least ten days before the ceremony is to take place, and often much earlier. Invitations to remote places are forwarded sooner, so that parties who propose to be present can arrange to make the journey.

The invitations to the marriage-ceremony are sent in the name of the bride's father and mother, or of one alone if one only be living. If the bride stands in other relationship, like that of ward, niece, granddaughter, cousin, or simply friend, to the persons or person issuing the invitation, the fact of this relation is noted in the formula in place of the word "daughter."

Accompanying the engraved note is a card

of invitation to the reception for such persons as are entitled to be bidden to partake of the festivities of the occasion. Very handsome church weddings are often carefully guarded by the master of ceremonies, and no one can enter the church without showing cards of admission.

As a place of worship, of course a church should be open to all; but liberties which appear to be proper are not upon all occasions agreeable in their consequences. Without these tickets of admission, the gentleman in charge of the ceremonials could not distinguish the plainly-costumed friends and acquaintances of the bridal party from that eager and idle rabble which would otherwise crowd the church, just for the satisfaction of looking upon that never tiresome spectacle—two persons who have come together to show publicly that they fully believe they were created to enjoy each other's society for ever and ever.

These tickets of admission are unwillingly used; but experience in New York has proved that there are weddings at which they are an unpleasant necessity.

One or more of these cards is also enclosed in the envelopes which cover the ceremonial invitation and the reception-card. They are intended for distribution to personal friends of the invited, and also for the use of servants who accompany guests to the church.

Friends who wear mourning costumes usually enter the church by these cards, quietly and early, and hide themselves in the crowd to escape the eyes of the bridal pair. Pleasant omens are not suggested, by those who are supposed to be wise in these prophetic phenomena, by one coming to us dressed in crape. Hence this delicate custom among the sorrowing, of absenting themselves from the festal part of weddings, and also of making themselves invisible to the marriage-party while they are present in church to join in the prayerful ceremony of the hour.

Invitations to weddings are now engraved upon one sheet of paper, the separate cards of the bride and of the groom being seldom in use. The following form is preferred for the engraving, which is plain script. The paper is

thick, fine, and shaped so as to fold once. If cipher, monogram, or crest of the bride's family be used upon the paper, it should not be printed in color for weddings, and the centre of the top of the page is the proper position for it. It is, however, considered elegant at present to place the monogram, cipher, or crest upon the envelope, and omit it from the note.

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER
request your presence
at the marriage of their daughter,
MISS MATILDE ALICE,
to
MR. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON,
on Tuesday morning, September tenth, 1878,
at eleven o'clock.
St. John's Cathedral,
New York.

(The word presence, instead of company, is rather the more dignified and impressive, but the latter is frequently used.)

For such as are really friends of the party most interested in the marriage, another card is inclosed with the above.

The following is the form of invitation to the reception:

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER

AT HOME,

Tuesday morning, September tenth,

from half-past eleven until four o'clock.

59 West Lombard Street.

The admission-card is narrow and long, and bears the following formula, neatly and plainly engraved in script:

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL.

Ceremony at eleven o'clock.

The order of the religious part of the marriage-ceremony is fixed by the church in which it occurs; but there are pleasant picturesque effects, and agreeable and significant surprises that may be added to the old-fashioned, staid regulations. These added attractions establish in the minds of those present a distinct remembrance of an event that should always remain a pleasant memory. Refined taste and a careful arrangement and understanding of the details

of these things are a decided necessity, and of course rehearsals are required.

The arrangement of the church pageant which is most admired at present, but which may be varied to please other conditions and other estimates of that which is agreeable, is the following:

First, the appointed master of ceremonies is expected to be present as soon as the church doors are opened, because the spectacle of an awning and carpet in front of any edifice is a signal that attracts the footsteps of many idlers of the street. He takes good care that the white ribbon which is stretched across the main aisle is placed far enough from the altar to provide sufficient room for every invited guest, remembering that ladies in full toilette require ample space. Sometimes an arch of flowers, mounted on wire-netting by the florist, is arranged to divide those who wear the wedding garment from those who do not. The organist must be early at his post, with the list of compositions which he is expected to play during the arrival of the audience.

The bridemaids, and an equal number of ushers, are chosen from among the friends of both families. These ushers stand by the inner entrance of the church, and offer their arms to escort the lady guests, as they enter, to their proper seats in the church. If a lady be accompanied by a gentleman, he follows her to her seat. These ushers, knowing the two families, understand where to place the nearer and where the remoter kinspeople of the bridal party, the groom's friends being arranged upon the right of the entrance and the bride's upon the left. This distribution of guests places the father or guardian of the bride at the proper place during the ceremony.

After the service, the ushers act as cavaliers of the bridemaids at the reception. At a morning wedding the groom and ushers wear dark frock coats and vests, with lighter pantaloons. Blue coats and vests, with light pantaloons, and indeed sometimes white vests, are fashionable, and selected by our gentlemen who admire the English style of dress at an early wedding. Gloves and neckties are light, but not white. A

boutonnière is furnished to each usher from the bride's own flowers, and it serves instead of the old distinguishing bridal favor of white ribbon.

The following is one of our recent formalities at church :

When the bridal party has arranged itself for entrance, the ushers, in pairs, march slowly up to the altar and turn to the right, keeping step to the organ music. After a very slight interval the bridemaids follow in pairs and turn to the left.

Another very brief interval of waiting, and the bride, escorted by her father, and entirely veiled, with her eyes cast down, follows her companions. The groom comes forward from the vestry-room to meet her, takes her hand, and places her at the altar. Both kneel for a moment's silent devotion. The parents stand just behind her, and slightly at the left. The service by the clergyman now proceeds as usual. All churches, at present, use the ring, and vary the sentiment of its adoption to suit the customs and ideas of their own rites. A jeweled ring has been for many years the sign and symbol of betrothal ; but, among people with German

tastes, a plain gold circlet, with the date of the engagement inscribed within, is generally preferred. This ring is sometimes removed by the groom at the altar, passed to the clergyman, and used in the ceremony as a wedding-ring. A jeweled ring is also placed upon her finger by the groom on the way home from the church, or as soon after the service as is convenient. It stands guard over its precious fellow, and is a confirmation of the first promise. This taste and practice are increasing.

Those who adhere to the jewel as a symbol of betrothal are fastidious even to superstition in their effort to procure a flawless diamond. The stone may be small, but it must be perfect.

The bridal veil may be thrown back from the face of the bride at the altar, by the groom, if he pleases; but it is not now considered quite reverent or respectful for him to kiss her thus publicly, and certainly not for the officiating clergyman. It is seldom that the veil is raised at all in the church. A delicate woman always rebels against the now disused formality of kissing in the church, and it is pleasant to announce

this habit as one of the obsolete customs of public marriages.

As she passes out from the church the bridemaids follow slowly, each upon the arm of an usher, and they afterward hasten onward as speedily as possible to welcome the bride at her own door, and to arrange themselves about the bride and groom in the *salon*, half of the ladies upon her side and half upon his, the first bridemaid retaining the place of honor. The ushers, at the door of the *salon*, offer themselves as escorts to guests who arrive slowly from the church, conducting them singly to the bridal party, and there presenting them by name. This announcement becomes necessary when two families and two sets of friends are brought together for the first time. If ladies are present without gentlemen, the ushers are careful to accompany them to the breakfast or refreshment room, or provide them with attendants, after which the ladies can easily manage to be comfortable by themselves.

The room for bridal presents is seldom thrown open to guests, and, if it is, the cards of the donors are detached, so that unpleasant

contrasts of values cannot be made. Indeed, the universal bridal present has fallen into disuse along with the universal funeral bouquet. It is not any more considered good breeding to talk about these contributions. Of course the bride acknowledges every gift that she receives by a note written with her own hand, but that is all. Whatever is presented on these occasions now takes the form of a compliment to the taste of the bride, or it is a practical contribution to the house she is about to establish. Gifts to the bride are generally marked with her maiden name or initials.

It is proper here to state that the groom generally gives scarf-pins, or something of the kind, to the ushers, and presents each of the bridemaids with some *souvenir* of this event. It may be a ring, enameled or jeweled; a fan, a locket with cipher of the bride and groom combined upon it, or that of the lady herself, with miniatures of the married pair inside of it. The bouquet and floral decorations of the bridemaids' costumes, also the gloves, and not infrequently the entire dress, are presented by the bride.

If the wedding occurs in the evening, the only difference between it and the ceremonials of the morning is, that the ushers or groomsmen wear full toilette, and the bridal pair retire quietly to dress for their journey and take their departure unobserved. At the morning wedding, only bridemaids, ushers, and relatives remain to witness the departure of the newly-wedded.

It is not etiquette for any person to inquire where the honeymoon is to be spent, and nobody but the two most interested is supposed to know anything of their immediate plans.

If the wedded pair commence life in a house of their own, it is customary to issue "At home" cards for a few mornings or evenings at no distant date, unless the marriage occurs in early summer, when these informal receptions are delayed until autumn. Only such persons are invited as the young people choose to keep as friends, or perhaps only those whom they can afford to retain. It is an easy and sensible opportunity for carefully rearranging one's social list, because there are limitations to hospitality which are frequently more necessary than agree-

able. This list of old friends and acquaintances cannot be too seriously considered and sifted, and no moment is so favorable as at the beginning of housekeeping. This custom of arranging a fresh list is admitted as a social necessity, and nobody is offended. The omission of reception-cards is taken as a communicative and intelligent silence, which may cause regret, but it cannot give offense. It only declares that by marriage the new household has doubled the number of its kinspeople and friends by uniting two families. That is all. These reception-cards are neither large nor small, but fine in quality. A note may be used if preferred; but the card is less ostentatious and more convenient. The following is the accepted style:

MR. AND MRS. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON

AT HOME,

Tuesday evenings in September,

from eight to eleven o'clock.

39 Bradford Street.

An elaborate table on these occasions is not considered in refined taste. The bride wears a

reception toilette and the groom is in full evening dress. This form of card is also used if the marriage has been very quiet.

In cases where the wedding has been private or informal, during the absence of the pair on their wedding-journey, the bride's family sometimes issue an announcement of the marriage to all their friends and acquaintances. This card or note implies that the marriage was fully sanctioned by the parents, and it dignifies the ceremony in the estimation of its recipients.

These notes are engraved, and in many instances they are prepared for distant friends who could not be present even at a grand wedding. Distance may make an invitation an absurdity. The form of this announcement is usually as follows, and it is sent in two envelopes, by post:

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER
announce the marriage of their daughter,
MISS MATILDE ALICE,
and
MR. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON,
Tuesday, October tenth, 1878.
No. 59 Lombard Street, New York.

A note of congratulation is usually sent to the parents of the bride, and also to the bridal pair if the intimacy of the parties warrants it.

If there has been no wedding reception, and a reception follows the return of the couple to town, even though the young people take possession of their own house, the mother of the bride usually gives one to them first. She sends out notes or large cards, engraved in the following manner:

MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER.
MRS. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON.
AT HOME,
Tuesday, December ninth,
from three until ten o'clock.
59 West Lombard Street.

If a reception be given only in the evening, the invitation will be issued in the names of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mortimer, and a separate card will bear the names of Mr. and Mrs. Alexis Stafford Carlton. One envelope encloses both cards.

It is permissible in cases where a marriage

takes place during seasons of family mourning, or of a misfortune, to issue cards simply bearing the names of the married party, with new address, and another card enclosed, upon which is engraved the maiden name of the bride.

The entry of the bridal party to the church may be varied to suit the taste, but care should be taken to avoid dramatic effects while endeavoring to be picturesque and impressive. If the formality described in this chapter be followed, the parties adopting it will be certain to find precedents for their style among the highest social circles of New York. But there are timid brides, who prefer to adhere strictly to the fashion of their grandmothers, and gain content in the imitation of a long line of worthy examples. In such cases the bridemaids first pass up the aisle, each with a gentleman on whom to lean; they turn at the altar, the ladies going to their left and the gentlemen to their right, and the groom follows, bearing his destined mother-in-law on his arm. This lady he seats, as speedily as politeness permits, in a convenient front pew at his left. The bride follows, cling-

ing to the arm of her father; or, if she be orphaned, her next-of-kin supports her on her way to her expectant groom. At her left, and just a step or two back of her, her father waits until asked to give her away, which he does by taking her right hand and placing it in that of the clergyman. After this brief but important formality, he joins the lady who entered with the groom and becomes her escort. The father and mother pass out of the church just behind the bridal company.

In England there is seldom more than one groomsman, and he is called the "best man." He attends the pair as if he were an exalted *valet.*

In America, if there are no bridemaids, the ushers walk into church in pairs, just in advance of the groom, and, parting at the altar, half stand at one side and half at the other. While the clergyman is congratulating the bride they become pairs again.

Among the bright and pleasant variations to the solemn pomp of a church wedding which etiquette heartily approves, although it does not prescribe it, is the strewing of flowers in the

path of the young couple as they go away from the altar. Little girls, costumed in white raiment, with baskets of blossoms, rise up, like unsuspected fairies, while the clergyman is congratulating the bride, and slowly drop roses down the aisle to the carriage. Sometimes garlands of flowers, that have been somewhere hidden, are suddenly seen stretched across the aisle at brief intervals, by little maidens who stand on the seats at the ends of the pews, and lift their pretty arms high in air to swing their roses over the pathway of the bridal party.

Sometimes, instead of garlands, they toss rose-leaves in crimson, gold, and white from the same high positions, all over the outgoing procession. Many other devices, fanciful and charming, may be added to the brief brightness of the moment.

Weddings at home vary but little from those at church. The music, the assembling of the friends, and the descent of the bridal party and their *entrée* to the position selected, are just the same. An altar of flowers and a place for kneeling can be easily arranged at home. The space

behind the altar need be no wider than is required for the clergyman to stand. It is generally only a high fender or railing, entirely concealed by foliage and blossoms. Whatever other floral accessories are desired, such as the marriage-bell, horse-shoe, or a white dove, can be arranged with ease by a skilled florist.

When the marriage-ceremony is concluded, the party turn in their places, and face their friends, who wait to congratulate them. If space be of importance, the kneeling-stool, and even the floral altar, may be removed a little later, without observation. The latter, however, is usually pushed back against the wall, and adds to the decorative part of the festivity.

Calls or card-leaving, by all the guests, upon the family of the bride, is a rigorous formality within ten days after the wedding.

The marriage ceremonies of widows differ only in the not wearing of a veil and the orange-blossoms. She may be costumed in white, and have her maids at the altar, if she pleases. This liberty has been given to her only within a few years, and refined taste will determine her in

these matters. On her wedding-cards of invitation her maiden name is used as a part of her proper name; this is but respect to her parents. Having dropped the initials of her deceased husband when she lays aside her crapes, she uses her own Christian name. If she have sons, or unmarried daughters, at the time she becomes again a wife, she prefixes the last name of her children to her new one, on all ceremonious occasions in which they are interested in common with herself. This respect is really due to them, and etiquette permits it, although our social usages do not imperatively command its adoption.

Of course, the formalities which follow the marriage of a widow can seldom be regulated in the same manner as those of a younger bride. Circumstances must control the entertainments which follow the marriage of a widow, and no fixed forms can be arranged for them. A quiet taste and refined sentiments are the best regulators of these civilities.

XIV.

CHRISTENINGS AND BIRTHDAYS.

ONCE upon a time the naming of the heir was considered the most important of all family celebrations until the day arrived when this young gentleman attained his majority. The daughter, not being entitled to much consideration in those days, seldom received her christening with public ostentation, and there were few expressions of delightful hope upon such occasions which were worth recording in history.

The dissenting churches, however, succeeded in reorganizing the forms of christenings among themselves, and their sentiments and usages eventually modified the ceremonies that were habitual to the established creed.

They transformed the old christening customs from a secular high festival of feasting and merriment to a profoundly religious formality, in which austerity was its most noticeable feature.

They selected this occasion, of providing names both for sons and daughters, as a fitting time for solemnly dedicating the futures of their offspring to the services of their own faith. This religious ceremony of naming the child, and at the same time consecrating it to a fixed form of faith, has been greatly and sensibly varied within the last quarter of a century among almost all our people.

The religious portion of this ceremony, in its extreme or severe services, has been pleasantly formulated so that participators in the celebration of christening may feel glad at the same time that they are reverential and grateful. Indeed, there is as wide a difference between the present sentiments and convictions which direct this ordinance of christening our children as there is between the former and the present methods of spending the first day of the week.

Our Puritan fathers and mothers beautified none of their religious customs; but their descendants have drifted, little by little, away from under the shadow of religious severities, and we have not only ordained for ourselves less rigid

usages, but we have acquired sweeter sentiments, tenderer and nobler estimates of duty, and more ennobling customs for christening the little folk, who cannot fetch their names into this world along with them.

These latter-day celebrations include or combine such social and religious forms as cannot, in the slightest degree, dull our perceptions of the highest duty which we owe to the little shapeless white soul that has come to us for guidance and development. Nor has the charm of a beautified religious custom lowered our standard of Christian conduct.

Almost all the old barbarities and inhumanities of worship are rapidly fading out of the world, even among the pagans. Indeed, it is said that there is less of that grosser servitude which long custom has failed to make satisfying to the most ignorant of people, and abhorrent practices are becoming obsolete, even in heathen lands.

Somebody who is both wise and good lately said that the "Gates of Prosperity" were the widest of all the entrances to heaven, as has

been proven by the records of Christian characters, and that the sweeter and more beautiful the social observances of a religion, the more profoundly devout was the believing household. Indeed, it would be difficult at present to establish a general belief that the consecration of a little child to a noble life was less sincere because the vow of watchful obligation was made in the presence of many friends, where flowers bloomed, aromas made the thin air deliciously sweet, and harmonious music drifted through the thoughts of the child's parents and sponsors during the sacred hour of consecration. Indeed, such fair surroundings enrich the moment with an abiding benediction. They possess a power of following one with a white wake of hallowed memories that compel us to keep our promised watch over the child.

That the christening ceremonials among our superior citizens are becoming more and more beautiful each year in New York, even our sourest ascetics admit with scarcely a word of disapproval.

The formality which is most in favor is the

giving of a reception; the hours are fixed from three or four o'clock until six P. M. It is equally proper to write the invitations, or to order them engraved in script.

The engraved form is scarcely varied from the following:

MR. AND MRS. JAMES ALDRICH
request the honor of your presence at the christening ceremony of their son [or daughter]
at five o'clock, Thursday, January tenth.
Reception from four to six o'clock.
No. 101 St. James Street.

This card receives an early response. The only difference between a written and an engraved note is in a less formal distribution of the language upon the note or card when the pen is used.

Flowers ornament the house tastefully and possibly elaborately. This decoration is subject to the season, and the ability to secure these pretty symbols of purity and sweetness. The guests all arrive in reception or visiting toilets, before five o'clock, and meet the host and hostess just as they would at any reception.

Sometimes there is a band of music, but oftener there are a pianist and a quartette of singers, the musicians, more than likely, being selected from among the friends or kinspeople of the child. Sometimes professional musicians are employed. There is a temporary font arranged in a prominent position in the room. A small round table or pedestal is chosen, and upon its centre is placed a silver goblet or bowl, or one of glass. The edge of the pedestal is often hung with vines suspended from its outer edge, so that the support of the baptismal vessel is hidden entirely. Smilax is beautiful and convenient for a deep fringe to a table. The top of this pedestal or table is built up to the rim of the bowl with white flowers, the lower row often being calla lilies laid with their points turned outward and downward, and other blossoms and foliage are arranged above them until the rim of the vessel is overlapped with bloom. Above this is sometimes suspended, by a thread, a white dove, with its wings outspread. This dove can be procured of a taxidermist or of a florist. If it is made of wire and fine white blossoms it is

pretty, but the real dove is much more effective and beautiful.

At five o'clock the child is brought to the parents, who stand by the font, and the sponsors join them. If it be a girl, its selected guardians are usually two young ladies, who are dressed in white, and who arrange themselves one at each side of the father and mother, and a hymn or chant is sung. The clergyman goes through the rite of christening, according to the formalities of his own established church; more music follows, and then a benediction. Directly after this, congratulations are offered to the father and mother, and the child is admired and petted, or it is removed to its own apartment, according to its desire or aversion to society. Refreshments are offered as at any afternoon entertainment, and they are usually of a richer quality than are provided at a very informal reception. Of course this pleasant custom is varied according to the poetic or artistic fancies of the household, but it is always beautiful and cheerful, and yet it is a sincere consecration.

The birthdays of children are being cele-

brated in New York more and more after the customs of Europeans. These waymarks in the lives of children are made pleasant remembrances to them. A little feast is made for the child, to which its playmates are invited, but the invitations seldom extend beyond a number that may be seated at table, where they are not overshadowed by larger eaters.

The feast is dainty and plentiful, but not hurtfully rich, and its especial characteristic is a cake in which are imbedded as many fancy wax-candles as are the years of the young person in whose honor the party is given. These candles are placed in little tin tubes and sunken near the outer edge of the cake, or they may be placed in a rim which is arranged about it. They are already lighted when the young people are invited into the banqueting apartment.

After the food is eaten, the one who is celebrating a birthday cuts the cake, if he or she is old and strong enough for such pleasant duty, and a piece of it is given to each guest. Plays or dances follow the supper. Guests are not expected to make presents. Indeed, with the

exception of a book, or a bunch of flowers, contributions would give pain rather than pleasure to the mother of the little host or hostess.

These little celebrations continue annually until the child is old enough to enter society. Even if the family be in mourning, a birthday is not forgotten, although the festival may be less gay than usual.

Among the elders of a household this annual return of the birthday is seldom celebrated in the presence of any persons except his or her own kinspeople. The twenty-first birthday of a gentleman is often made an occasion for extending hospitalities in the form of a dinner, a party, or a ball, but a lady's age is not thus publicly noticed, for obvious but absurd social reasons. After the lady or gentleman becomes astonishingly old, and they feel proud of their longevity, the most beautiful attentions are often bestowed upon them by their young friends, and also by those who were the companions of their youth. Flowers, letters of congratulation, cards of inquiry and respect, gifts that will interest, breakfast or dinner parties, and receptions, are con-

sidered in "good form," as the English express an act which is properly performed.

There are few vigorous people who care to emphasize the fact that they are passing still another annual milestone, until they have really reached and entered upon the late afternoon of life, and are feeling the sweet twilight of calm falling like a blessing upon them. It is this earlier unwillingness to watch and count the years as they go by that has led to the giving up of birthday celebrations in the presence of one's acquaintances during that active interval which comes in between youth and old age.

Even a remembrance of this anniversary in one's own household is oftenest recalled only by "a gift without words," rather than by a spoken congratulation.

XV.

MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES.

A NOTICEABLE entertainment upon each annual return of marriage days is a custom in but few of our best families. In the limited circle of the fireside, however, the day is usually marked by expressions of good-will, and the bestowal of gifts between husband and wife, and also from children and their parents; but this is all.

After the passing of a certain number of years, which are marked off into epochs by several distinguishing but fanciful names, many of our households celebrate the anniversaries of their marriage by extended hospitalities. Of course, elderly people feel and manifest their joy by graver or more dignified formalities in their entertainments than is expected of younger husbands and wives, the latter often providing merriment of a fanciful kind. Not that any of

these anniversaries are emphasized in our higher circles "upon the contribution plan," as a cynical writer upon our social customs has most aptly styled that sort of hospitality which intimates by the form of its invitations that presents are expected. To offer a *souvenir* to a bride is a pleasant method of expressing to her our good wishes, but to contribute to the sustainment of her after house-furnishing is quite another affair. As a custom, begging is unknown to the superior entertainers of New York.

The marriage anniversary which falls after five years is sometimes called "a wooden wedding;" after ten years, it is mentioned as "tin;" after twenty, it is "crystal;" at twenty-five, it is "silver;" at fifty, it is a "golden anniversary;" and at sixty, the "diamond wedding" occurs.

Those who have lived together in contented wedlock twenty-five years are usually glad enough to express their happiness in some emphatic manner, and also to beg the recognition of this event by their friends and acquaintances.

Our most self-respecting households who desire to celebrate a return of their wedding-day

are compelled, through their delicacy of feeling, to relinquish a general gala entertainment, or else to make an announcement upon their cards of invitation of their private sentiments in the matter of a miscellaneous gift-making. Just now we are passing through an unpleasant social transition, and we hope soon to have attained a higher civilization in this particular; these apparently compulsory contributions upon certain occasions, either glad or sorrowful, will have fallen into disuse.

It is no more agreeable to the entertainer to be compelled, in self-defense, to direct that "no gifts received" be engraved upon cards of invitation to a party than it is to add R. S. V. P., which four consonants unpleasantly suggest that there may be a lack of familiarity with polite usages on the part of those who are bidden to an entertainment. Without doubt we shall soon pass the "donation period" in our social customs, and a gift will become what it really should be, significant of something superior to a meaningless habit.

Of course, very near kinspeople and very

dear old friends will take the liberty sometimes of disregarding the engraved injunction, just as such valued individuals indulge themselves in familiarities with the rules that usually govern one's private social affairs. But if remoter relatives or mere society acquaintances send a gift other than flowers or a book, after being requested to restrict their generosity, they need not be surprised if the act be considered an impertinence, and resented accordingly. The value of a gift has come to be measured, by persons of delicacy, by the motive which prompted its bestowal, and there is a decidedly serious effort being made by our refined and influential leaders of society to escape from an unpleasantness that may be suffered equally by the giver and the receiver of formal presents.

People of superior breeding regard anniversary contributions to their household effects with distress, if not with aversion, and such gifts, if not presented by those who possess a natural right to make such bestowals, are likely to be returned to their donors.

When this custom of self-respecting inde-

pendence of material favors is fully established in our higher circles, society will be pitched at least an octave above its late key-note. Indeed, there are not a few married people who refrain from asking their friends and acquaintances to participate in their rejoicing upon anniversary days, through fear of being considered willing to receive gifts from those whom they desire only to be merry with. Doubtless it is for this reason that fashion has frowned upon the grotesquerie of cards of wood, tin, etc., which were popular only a few years since as notifications to a guest of the occasion which suggested a festivity.

The prevailing style of cards of invitation to an anniversary party or reception is just the same as to any ordinary entertainment. A wedding-bell, or a horseshoe of white flowers, with the date of the marriage wrought into it with colored blossoms, or a bride's loaf dated by confections, and placed upon a separate table of honor, informs the guests of the reason for rejoicing, after their arrival, when congratulations follow as a matter of course.

When a quarter of a century of married life is

to be celebrated, it is customary to mention the fact upon the cards, and the much-needed information, *no gifts received*, is placed in the left-hand lower corner. The formula of the invitation is in the following style, clearly engraved in script:

MR. AND MRS. JOHN WINTHROP
request the pleasure of your presence
on Monday evening, January ninth, at eight o'clock,
to celebrate the
twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage.
No. 22 Adams Street.
No gifts received.

In responding to this invitation, either to accept or decline the hospitable civility, courteous congratulations are added in any graceful style which an acquaintance with the givers of the entertainment may suggest. A too familiar and over-cordial note of response is almost as offensive as one which expresses no interest at all in the parties, who have been wedded companions through so many years. There is a happy medium to the formalities of even kindly wishes. It is not unnatural to suspect an ac-

quaintance of insincerity when excesses of language are used in society matters.

When such an impressive anniversary has arrived, it is customary for the host and hostess to secure as many guests as possible from among those who were present at their wedding. The clergyman who performed the ceremony is bidden, and, if possible, the wedding-garments are again worn upon the occasion. The clergyman returns thanks for the prolonged life of the pair, and such other interesting formalities are added as will make the occasion impressive, without being oppressive.

After the clergyman has completed his part of the ceremony (provided his presence has been secured), the near kinspeople offer congratulations first, when other guests follow after the manner of a wedding reception. When a formal supper is provided, the host and hostess lead together upon this peculiar occasion, and the guests follow in convenient order, as at an ordinary party.

If the supper be arranged in *buffet* style, the bride and groom retain their positions during

the entire evening, except there be dancing, when they frequently lead the first set, which is usually a cotillon upon such anniversaries. The guests seek the *buffet* or table for refreshments whenever it suits their pleasure, and take leave before midnight, after having expressed parting wishes for many more years of health and gladness to their entertainers. After-calls of formality are expected as a matter of course.

There are many beautiful and suggestive decorations possible upon such an occasion. Sometimes all the floral ornaments in the house are fully-blossoming roses and ivy, or rich foliage and no bloom. Among the loveliest and most suggestive of house decorations for a golden wedding anniversary are groups of palms and gracefully drooping heads of wheat, tied up in small sheaves. Garlands of laurel and autumnal foliage are also both charming and pleasantly significant of the afternoon of a happy life.

XVI.

NEW-YEAR'S-DAY IN NEW YORK.

A GENERAL and cordial reception of gentlemen guests upon the first day of the year, by the ladies of almost every household, also by clergymen, and by gentlemen upon the first New-Years'-Day after marriage, is a Knickerbocker custom which prevailed in New York, with scarce any innovations, until within the last ten years. It was once a day when all gentlemen offered congratulations to each of their lady acquaintances, and even *employés* of a gentleman were permitted to pay their respects, and to eat and drink with the ladies of his household. Hospitalities were then lavishly offered and as lavishly received.

This custom began when the city was small, but it has now quite outgrown those possibilities which the original usages of the day could compass without difficulty. Beside, there came a time when this excessive social freedom was

proportionate to our over-large political liberties, therefore, our hospitalities were narrowed down to a lady's own circle of acquaintances. Even this boundary in many instances widened to so extended a circumference that not a few of our kindliest and most hospitable of ladies have been compelled either to close their doors upon this day of hand-shaking, eating, and drinking, or else to issue cards of welcome to as many of their gentlemen acquaintances as they can entertain in a single day.

Not many ladies in New York are, however, placed upon such heights of popularity as to make this limitation a genuine necessity, and others may choose to receive congratulations upon New-Year's-Day only from relatives and intimate friends. Some ladies who are unable to endure the fatigue of an all-day reception, or who have other engagements, also issue cards to their gentlemen friends, with the hours which will be given to hospitality on New-Year's-Day engraved or written upon them.

Ladies who receive in a general way whoever choose to call upon them are now almost certain

that the old-time crowds which thronged all open doors a decade ago will no longer intrude upon those from whom they are uncertain even of a recognition. "A man's a man for a' that" was the sentiment which once prevailed in New York at New-Year's time; but, to be considered a man of to-day, he must be well-bred and unobtrusive, even during this gala season. Indeed, he must be a gentleman. Besides that, he must have received some unmistakable intimation that his congratulatory visit at this time will be agreeable to the ladies of a household, before he ventures upon a visit. He may be assured of a welcome by the fact that the ladies of his own household interchange civilities with the family whose name he places upon his visiting-list. He may also know it by an unmistakable graciousness on the part of the lady or ladies when he has met them in society.

There are many ways of understanding these things, but a stranger in New York now no longer waits for this single blessed day as the one that is certain to see doors open to him, which, uninvited, he desires to enter. If he

should depend upon the old Knickerbocker privilege of a universal welcome at New-Year's, more than likely he will not fail of his anticipations, but he need not be surprised if his hostesses consider him again a stranger the moment he has left them.

Those who entertain elaborately upon New-Year's-Day sometimes send out cards of invitation in the name of the hostess. They are handsomely engraved, and inclosed in a single envelope. If a daughter or daughters receive with her, Miss Blank or Misses Blank is engraved beneath her own name. If other ladies than her daughters also receive with her, their visiting-card may be inclosed in the same envelope with the hostess's invitation. Should the lady-guest invite her own personal friends to meet her at the residence of her hostess for this day, she writes the number of the residence where she is to receive on New-Year's upon her own card, adding the receiving hours in ink, and she incloses the visiting-card of her hostess.

The invitation of the hostess is engraved in the following form:

MRS. CASHILL LEROY,

AT HOME,

January first, from one until ten o'clock.

No. 75 Great Thomas Street.

The hostess and other ladies are in full toilets, and the house is lighted as if it were evening. A table is spread, as if for an ordinary reception or party, in the back parlor or dining-room. A servant opens the street-door without waiting for the sound of the bell. The gentlemen leave their cards in the hall. They enter the drawing-room with hat in hand, or they may leave it in the hall with overcoat and cane. If their visits are made without a carriage, this disposition of their outer garment is usually a necessary safeguard to health. Ladies in full costume require the atmosphere of their drawing-rooms to be kept at heights which are intolerable to visitors wearing heavy outer coats.

Ladies rise to receive their guests; but if the apartment be not crowded it is not improper to be seated. The hostess offers her hand to her guest when he enters, and, after an interchange of friendly wishes, he is presented to her lady-

friends, to whom he bows and wishes a happy year; but it is not expected that the young or unfamiliar ladies will extend their hands to him. If the visitor has been invited by a guest of the hostess, the latter meets him with the same cordiality as if he were her own friend. The sacredness of hospitality demands this from her, both for her own and her friend's sake, no matter how indifferent she may be to the caller.

When the sentiments usual to the season have been expressed, a servant offers him coffee or other refreshments, provided the rooms be not crowded, in which case he may seek the table without invitation if he desires food. Perhaps one of the lady entertainers, who wishes to be especially attentive, may accompany him to the feasting-room, even if she be obliged to return to her place directly to receive other incoming guests. A servant will supply his wants; but, whether he eats or declines refreshment, his visit must be very brief, not to exceed five or ten minutes. Three minutes is the utmost limit some of our fashionable gentlemen allow themselves at one residence. If he has visited the

refreshment-room, he may retire from the house without interrupting his hostess, provided she be occupied with later visitors. In any event, even if she be not very deeply engrossed, he need only bow to each lady as he passes out from their presence.

The lady who receives her New-Year's callers less formally may write, "January 1" upon her visiting-card, and send it to such of her gentlemen acquaintances as she may like to see upon the first day of the year. If she thus intimates her desire for visitors, she must provide some refreshment to offer to them; but it need not be an elaborate entertainment. She may wear a visiting costume with light gloves, but she need not turn on the gas, because informal receptions are held in daylight. If she does not mention upon her card the hours for receiving, it is etiquette for a gentleman to call at any time between twelve M. and ten o'clock in the evening.

The formalities between hostess and guest are the same as if the reception were held in grand toilet. The lady who does not issue

cards, but graciously receives whatever gentlemen acquaintances choose to visit her upon this day, appears as she would upon any "at home" afternoon in the year. She dresses in visiting toilette, wears light gloves, and she may, or she may not, have provided a table of refreshments for her uninvited, but still most welcome guests. She is ready to receive by twelve o'clock, unless she intends to decline visitors altogether, when she usually suspends a basket from the door-handle as a receptacle for the cards of those who would gladly have paid their respects to her during this initial day of the new year.

Many gentlemen in New York who cannot visit at this time inclose their visiting-cards in envelopes, and send them by messengers to their lady friends on the morning of New-Year's, or by post the day before. Others drive from door to door and leave their cards in person, the right-hand side being folded over to assure their lady acquaintances that they did not trust this courtesy to the care of a servant. A gentleman leaves as many cards as there are ladies who are old enough to receive visitors; and, if there be a

clergyman or an invalid gentleman in the family, he writes over his own name upon a separate card:

For Mr. Samuel Forbes.

It is a delicate politeness for a gentleman to leave this token of kindly remembrance and respect for such individuals, even if there are no ladies in the same house to whom he owes a similar civility upon New-Year's-Day.

The quality, quantity, and costliness of the table appointments and of its supplies on New-Year's-Day at present fall far short of our old-fashioned lavishness. Things which are delicate to the taste and attractive to the eyes are in higher favor than more substantial food, and with very excellent reason. A gentleman who spends from six to ten hours in paying flying visits, each one as brief as he can well make it, cannot eat and drink at each residence that he enters, even if he desires to do so, which, of course, he does not, but the "breaking of bread and the eating of salt" in many homes, just for the significance of the formality, requires that he partake lightly and of light food wherever he lingers for refreshment.

Many gentlemen, even among those who take wine ordinarily, refuse it upon this day, because they do not like to accept it at the hand of one lady and refuse it from that of another. Again, many ladies, from whose daily tables the glitter of wine-glasses is never absent, do not supply this drink to their guests upon this day, because it is dangerous for their acquaintances to partake of varied vintages, the more specially while passing in and out from over-heated drawing-rooms. Delicacies, coffee, chocolate, tea, and *bouillon*, are supplied in their places, whether the wines be withheld by kindly considerateness, or through conscientious scruples.

Gentlemen should wear a morning costume of dark coat and vest, with lighter pantaloons, when they pay New-Year's calls. It is not uncommon to see dress-suits, but the taste is questionable, dress-suits never being strictly correct until evening. Gloves, while they may be light in tint, should never be white. Medium tints in scarfs and gloves are in taste upon these occasions.

XVII.

FUNERAL CUSTOMS AND SEASONS OF MOURNING.

A FEW years ago and a portion of this chapter could not have been written. The etiquette which carried formal people through the old ordeals of bereavement by death was invariably the same among all classes of society from one end of our land to the other. The very monotony of expression which grief felt compelled to assume, in order to be respectable, was one of its least endurable qualities. We all knew that, whenever one of our kinspeople departed from us, there were just such and such processes of systematic attentions to be performed over his remains, and just such quality and quantity of solemnity was to be thrown about the conduct of our lives for a certain length of time. It was all settled by custom.

We knew that whatever agony we suffered, much of our distress must be endured in the

presence of auditors, and that all the offices of kindliness which it was possible to bestow upon the beloved dead must be performed by the hands of neighbors or hirelings. Among such liberties as are enumerated with thankful pride, the freedom of mourning for our dead, and of caring for their inanimate forms according to the suggestions of our affection, could not be counted.

A transformation in funeral services came about, but just how it happened nobody knows. There is at present really no strict etiquette for the conduct of burials in New York. Of course the religious services performed over the dead are more or less under the influence of the Church to which the officiating clergyman belongs, but the usages of burial are no longer guided and controlled by any fixed set of regulations.

The arranging and composing of the person of the departed has ceased to be a stereotyped crossing of the palms upon the breast and a rigid upturning of the face. Natural and easy positions of the hands, with the features in partial

profile, have become customary and more agreeable. The clothing is almost always the same as that worn in life. For the young, festal costumes are often selected; and happily the appalling shroud and winding-sheet belong to the dreary legends of the past.

It is not uncommon for the soulless body to be neatly attired, as if it were a semi-invalid who had fallen asleep upon a sofa. It is tenderly pillowed and luxuriously draped. Friends take their last look upon the quiet face, and there is at least one throb of pain the less because of the absence of a coffin.

The apartment is often made to wear a cheery aspect by the presence of bright and sweet flowers, which are chosen and arranged with a taste from which ostentatious lavishness is excluded. Pallid blossoms are not chosen by all who have been bereaved. Religious services are frequently performed while the deceased is still lying uncoffined, and the burial takes place at any subsequent time which is convenient to the survivors. This satisfactory arrangement has led to less public interments, because under

such circumstances none but immediate kinspeople follow the hearse to the cemetery.

It is not uncommon for only the male relations of the deceased to be present at the interment, but etiquette fixes no rule for these things. Individual inclination determines the form of such sad offices.

So lavish have been the offerings of flowers that were wrought into unnatural forms, and dedicated by their letterings to absurd uses, that many families beg, through a public card which accompanies the funeral notice, that no friends will contribute flowers. Not that they are banished utterly, but they are delicately selected, and a sentiment of reserve rather than ostentation is expressed by their selection and arrangement.

Sometimes a tiny sheaf of ripened wheat is laid with a palm branch upon the coffin, or by the side of the venerable dead. A wreath of bay-leaves is chosen for the one whose loss is a public calamity; white lilies and willow branches, or a garland of poppies, for the long-suffering, are satisfying; but pillows of wire-fettered carna-

tions and harps of rosebuds are becoming less and less attractive to individuals of refined taste. These costly and ungraceful contributions, with the cards of their donors attached, for news-gatherers to copy and to publish, are not among the refined accessories of a funeral among our superior people.

A bunch of fragrant blossoms upon the bosom of the dead, flowers selected with an appropriateness to the circumstances, age, or sentiments of the soulless sleeper, are always an agreeable and suggestive attention; but flowers tied into forms, or in any excess, are no longer considered refined or desirable.

The old custom of sitting by the dead, during the long solemn nights that come in between death and burial, has also passed away, except where the remains require attention. It is a sleep that needs no guarding under ordinary circumstances.

For the funeral of either a lady or gentleman, six or eight friends are chosen from the immediate circle of the deceased, to act as "bearers of the pall," provided the burial follows the fune-

ral. This formality becomes an unnecessary usage when the burial is not immediate. These bearers are furnished with black kid gloves to wear at the funeral of a gentleman or an elderly lady, but white ones are usually worn when a young lady has departed. A scarf of black crape or of fine white linen, according to the occasion, is tied about the left arm or laid about the shoulders. These gentlemen sometimes carry the dead to and from the hearse, but oftener they only serve as a guard, and stand with lifted hats during the removal of the dead by persons who have been detailed for this duty.

The family and intimate friends do not take leave of their beloved in the presence of the public, when a funeral service is held either at the house or in church. This suffering is endured in private before the arrival of those who are only acquaintances. The family are not visible at the time when formal religious rites are being held, but they are not beyond the hearing of the words of the clergyman.

Sometimes a chosen friend, and sometimes a sexton, arranges the mournful programme that

begins a funeral and terminates at the grave, thus sparing the wearied from unnecessary anxiety.

A widow wears the plainest of crape and bombazine costume, with a little cap border of white *lissé*, or tarletan. During three months her long veil is worn to conceal her face. Afterward, she may wear a short black tulle veil, with her crape drapery thrown backward. This extreme expression of respect, or of mourning, must be worn a full year, and as much longer as the widow chooses.

In France, the customary evidences of grief are fixed and permanent, as were our own funeral rites until very lately. This invariableness of costume during times of bereavement contrasts sharply, and almost absurdly, with the usual Parisian caprices of dress. In New York widows seldom dress in gay colors, and not a few of them wear only black dresses as long as they live, or until they are again wedded. This constant costume is of silk, cashmere, etc., and lightened by laces, white tulle ruchings, and other softening bits of gauzy prettiness.

For a father, mother, and for children, the deepest expression of sorrow that garments can produce is worn for one year at least; and afterward circumstances and individual convictions determine how soon black shall be lightened in quality until it ceases to be a mourning attire. For brothers and sisters, there are six months of crape and bombazine, six of cashmere, unlustred silks, and grenadines of plain texture; and afterward black, white, and gray are considered appropriate tints of dress for another half year. The wearing for three months of colorless garments is customary after the decease of grandparents, aunts, and uncles, but crapes are not usually selected after the loss of these remoter kinspeople.

Children wear mourning garments a year when they have lost a father, mother, brother, or sister; but white and black are so combined in their costumes that the little ones are not too deeply saddened by their attire.

Gentlemen's hats carry a depth of weed that is cut according to the nearness of the relative for whose loss it is worn, and, except in case of

a widower, they continue to dress in mourning garments as long as it is the habit of their households, leaving the period of its use to be regulated entirely by the ladies. A widower should wear deep mourning, which includes gloves, necktie, and weed, with a costume of black or of very dark gray, for at least one year. Scrupulous and formal gentlemen wear black-bordered linen, and jet shirt-studs and buttons, but these persons are not numerous in New York.

Satisfactory as it would be to announce that limitations or fixed periods, for the wearing of sombre robes after the loss of our kinspeople, had been decided upon by any social leaders, we have not yet reached that point. The quality of the fabrics which express the utmost sorrow has been the same for many a year, and it is recognized by every lady; but just how long it is to be worn is undetermined by our authorities in these matters. It is an unquestioned custom for all who attend a funeral to attire themselves in black garments if possible, and certainly not in gay ones, as a mark of respect to the afflicted family.

The length of time to be devoted to seclusion from society after a funeral is another unfixed limit. Indeed, in regard to funerals and their subsequent and consequent appointments, there is no rigid etiquette, and this chapter is written to explain the freedom rather than the formality of these things. Many people entertain conscientious scruples which prevent the adoption of a mourning garb under any circumstances, and their convictions are respected. They insist that no set of sentiments should be expressed by material things. Hence our chaotic freedom in these matters.

Neither visiting nor a general receiving of guests, formally, within a year after the loss of a near relative, is considered in good form, and usually two years are devoted to a more or less severe seclusion from general society. This retirement does not lessen the considerate attentions of friends. Cards are sent to express sympathy when a death occurs, but only an intimate friendship affords one permission to write a note of condolence. Long, torturing letters of sympathy are fortunately among our obsolete customs.

Printed or engraved notes, or large cards, heavily bordered with black, sometimes, but very rarely, announce the decease of a member of the family. They usually furnish the place and date of birth, the residence and date of decease. Occasionally a brief account of the departed, with the place and time of funeral, is also included in this announcement, which is seldom sent to acquaintances until after the burial. This British custom has not as yet gained a foothold in New York. The daily press, of course, announces the death and date of funeral.

It is proper to call at the door in person and make kindly inquiries for the household, also to leave visiting-cards with the left side or left lower corner folded over, as soon as a death in one's circle is published; but it is not etiquette to ask to see the afflicted unless there exists a genuine intimacy between the visitor and the bereaved.

THE END.

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